

**Testimony of
Karen Jordan, DVM
National Milk Producers Federation**

**Before the
U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Agriculture
Subcommittee on Livestock, Dairy, and Poultry
Hearing on Animal Welfare in Agriculture
May 8, 2007**

Thank you for inviting the National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) to testify before you today.

My name is Karen Jordan. I am a practicing veterinarian in Siler City, North Carolina where I own a large animal veterinary service. My husband and I also own and operate Brush Creek Swiss Farms with 75 registered Brown Swiss cows and 70 replacement heifers. Since 1993 I have served as the vice-chairperson for the NMPF Animal Health Committee. For the past three years I have also served as the chair of the Cattle Health Committee for the National Institute for Animal Agriculture.

My testimony today focuses on the animal care practices that U.S dairy producers provide for their animals every day and the efforts the dairy industry has taken to improve animal welfare. U.S. dairy producers have a long history of providing excellent care to their dairy cattle. This responsibility is not only a moral imperative, but it also pays dividends, since healthy, comfortable cows perform more effectively. Dairy farmers recognize that proper animal care practices lead to the production of high quality milk.

Simply put, what's good for the cows is good for our business. Too often, people not familiar with, or those with an ideological bias against livestock production, assume that farmers can afford to be cavalier about the health of their herds. I would tell you that, to the contrary, today we understand more than ever how interconnected animal well-being and economic well-being are, for farmers and their cows.

Every day all dairy farmers, regardless of the size of their operation, invest a great deal of time and resources to ensure their cows are provided the best health care, housing conditions, and proper nutrition. While specific animal care practices vary depending on geographic region and climate, proper animal care is practiced throughout the industry.

In 2002, NMPF and the Milk and Dairy Beef Quality Assurance Center came together to develop the *Caring for Dairy Animals Technical Reference Guide*. This is a comprehensive set of dairy animal well-being guidelines that covers all aspects of dairy

animal care. The manual addresses all key elements of dairy animal care and recommends best management practices based on the most current science. Also included is a voluntary self-audit in a checklist format that producers can complete. The self-audit addresses quality control points that can be objectively observed by the producer. The Milk and Dairy Beef Quality Assurance Center also offers a third party auditing component of the program. Many dairy farmers choose to go through the on-farm audit to verify that their farm is following the animal care practices.

These guidelines, recognized by the Food Marketing Institute and the National Council of Chain Restaurants, were developed using the most current animal well-being research. The guidelines have been extensively reviewed by dairy animal welfare experts and are endorsed by the American Association of Bovine Practitioners. At the inception of the guidelines, a strong promotional effort led by NMPF was initiated and these guidelines were widely distributed to dairy farmers, veterinarians, dairy nutritionists, milk cooperative field staff and others who interact with dairy farmers on a daily basis.

The dairy industry has not only addressed animal care standards for milking cows, but also for dairy calves, replacement heifers, and veal calves. Farmers that raise replacement heifers utilize the *Raising Quality Replacement Heifers* guidelines. The American Veal Association has developed the Veal Quality Assurance Program, which provides stringent guidelines for animal well-being and care and requires multiple yearly onsite visits from an accredited and licensed veterinarian to document compliance.

Several years ago, the New Jersey Department of Agriculture was mandated to develop and adopt regulations governing the minimum standards for the humane treatment of domestic livestock. The *Caring for Dairy Animals Technical Reference Guide* was the set of dairy animal welfare guidelines the State of New Jersey used to develop the dairy component of the standards.

There are also other dairy animal welfare verification programs that states or dairy organizations have developed. For example New York has created the New York State Cattle Health Assurance Program which includes an animal welfare component in the audit and California has developed the California Dairy Quality Assurance Program which also has an animal welfare component.

In addition to animal care guidelines, the dairy industry also supports new research in the animal well-being area. As new appropriate technologies and/or animal care practices arise, they are recommended to producers. In the past decade, animal welfare research has led to many improvements in cow comfort. Because of this research, farmers have applied the improvements gained from the research into their management practices. Today many dairy farmers provide their cows with fans and sprinkler systems to keep them cool and comfortable. Farmers also install rubber mats for their cows to stand on as well as clean, comfortable bedding such as sand or rubber mattresses for their cows to lie on. Routine herd health programs are also a part of all dairy farmers' management practices.

Through a combination of modern production technologies and experience gained across generations of dairying, today's milk producers know how to maximize cow comfort and well-being in order to achieve record levels of milk production per cow. NMPF continues to work with other dairy organizations to promote the animal care guidelines to dairy producers.

As you can see U.S. dairy farmers have been very involved in the welfare of their animals and dairy farmers want to provide the utmost care for their animals. Because of all the industry efforts, we respectfully request that you oppose any proposed farm animal welfare legislation as part of the 2007 Farm Bill. Dairy farmers' livelihood is already based on well cared for and healthy animals to produce wholesome, nutritious dairy products. Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to testify on behalf of the National Milk Producers Federation.

Curriculum Vitae
Karen Jordan, DVM
Large Animal Veterinary Services
840 Wrenn Smith Rd
Siler City, NC 27344
919-663-5996
kjordan358@sprintpcs.com

Education:

1986- North Carolina State University, School of Veterinary Medicine, Doctor of Veterinary Medicine

1981- North Carolina State University, School of Ag and Life Sciences, Bachelor of Science Degree, cum laude, major in Animal Science

Work Experience:

1995 to present- owner of Large Animal Veterinary Services

1986 to present- wife of Norman Jordan, Jr. - owner of Brush Creek Swiss Farms, milking 75 registered Brown Swiss, 70 replacement heifers

1998 to present- producer member with Dairy Farmers of America

National Presentations:

2005 – Animal Agriculture Alliance – Producer Animal Welfare Initiatives: Recent Improvements and What May Be Next

2006 – National Institute for Animal Agriculture – Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Planning, Challenge of Allowing Negative Products to Move Intra and Interstate

Committee Leadership and Membership:

1993 to present- National Milk Producers Federation, Animal Health Committee, vice-chair

2004 to present- National Institute for Animal Agriculture, chair of Cattle Health Committee, vice chair 2003

2006 to present- North Carolina State Animal Response Team, Board of Directors

2005 to present- North Carolina Dairy Security Committee, producer subcommittee

2002 to present- North Carolina Johne's Disease Advisory Committee

2002 to present- National Johne's Disease Working Group, Strategic Planning Committee

2004 – 2005 – Dairy Cattle Identification subcommittee of the US Animal Identification Plan

1998 to 2001- American Veterinary Medical Association, Steering Committee on Judicious Therapeutic Antimicrobial Use

1991 to 1997 – American Veterinary Medical Association, Animal Agriculture Liaison Committee

1996 to 2001 – National Mastitis Council Board of Directors

1992 to 1997 – Secretary's Advisory Committee on Foreign Animal and Poultry Diseases

Awards and Honors:

2007 – National Institute for Animal Agriculture, President’s Award, Outstanding Committee Chairperson

1992 – Outstanding Alumni, North Carolina State University, College of Veterinary Medicine

1989 – 1990 – Outstanding Young Dairymen to Karen and Norman Jordan, Southeast Division of Dairymen, Inc.

Membership Activities:

American Association of Bovine Practitioners

American Veterinary Medical Association

National Mastitis Council

North Carolina Veterinary Medical Association

Dairy Farmers of America

North Carolina Dairy Producers Association

Silk Hope Junior Dairy Show

North Carolina Percheron Horse Association

Percheron Horse Association of America

North Carolina Horse Council