



News Release

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"Connecting Cows, Cooperatives, Capitol Hill, and Consumers"



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Statement on Burnham Dairy Farm – Okeechobee, Florida

From Emily Meredith, Chief of Staff, NMPF:

ARLINGTON, VA – “The National Milk Producers Federation and its National Dairy FARM™ (Farmers Assuring Responsible Management) Program were notified by Southeast Milk (SMI) on Nov. 15, 2017, of a video showing improper animal care practices on one of its member farms in Okeechobee, Fla. The FARM Program takes seriously all allegations of animal abuse or mistreatment. Animal abuse of any kind is never tolerated.

“Following notification from SMI, a dairy cooperative participating in the FARM Program, FARM Program staff immediately began gathering and reviewing evidence relating to reports of animal abuse and neglect on the dairy farm. The sole source of the allegations is a video and photo documentation created by animal activist organization Animal Recovery Mission.

“The FARM Program, following activation of its official [protocol](#) on Willful Mistreatment, launched a thorough investigation, including mandating that a third-party audit be conducted on the farm. Burnham Dairy Farm in Okeechobee has been placed on probationary status, pending the completion of all corrective actions deemed necessary by the auditors.

“We urge activist groups such as the Animal Recovery Mission to immediately report to the proper authorities any evidence of farm animal mistreatment. The months-long delay in sharing the information that was released this week has hindered the ability of the FARM Program and others to immediately put the welfare of farm animals first.

“In the coming weeks, the FARM Program will work with Florida’s dairy farm community to enhance the training of dairy workers. The newest iteration of the program, [Version 3.0](#), requires enhanced training of workers, and the FARM Program will expedite the implementation of those protocols across the state to ensure farmers’ commitment to the highest standards of animal care. The FARM Program is committed to working with SMI and all other program participants to ensure compliance with existing standards while focusing on continuous improvement in the future.”

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The National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF), based in Arlington, VA, develops and carries out policies that advance the well-being of dairy producers and the cooperatives they own. The members of NMPF's cooperatives produce the majority of the U.S. milk supply, making NMPF the voice of dairy producers on Capitol Hill and with government agencies. For more on NMPF's activities, visit our website at www.nmpf.org.