



# News Release

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

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## **National Dairy FARM Program Reaches 70% Participation Threshold** Revised Program Care Criteria to Be Released This Spring



ARLINGTON, VA – The dairy industry's animal care program has achieved an important milestone, with 70 percent of the nation's milk now participating in the program. With the recent addition of several major cooperatives in the [National Dairy FARM Program](#) (Farmers Assuring Responsible Management™), more than two-thirds of the nation's cows will be covered by the industry's animal well-being effort, according to the National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF).

NMPF started the FARM program three years ago to provide a consistent, national, verifiable means of showing consumers and the food value chain how dairy products are produced. The number of cooperatives and processors subscribing to the program has continued to grow, and now includes farms producing 70% of America's milk supply.

"Consumers and customers don't expect perfection, but they do expect us to collectively demonstrate our industry's responsible practices and our commitment to quality animal care," said Jerry Kozak, President and CEO of NMPF. "I'm proud of the ongoing progress our farmers are making by working to implement the FARM program's guidelines on their own operations."

Kozak said that even with the increased participation in the FARM program, "We need more farms, more cooperatives, and more companies to commit themselves to this program. The expectations are out there. The questions are being asked. We have to provide clear answers," he said.

In addition to the positive development in the level of participation in the program, Kozak said that the FARM program's guidelines, contained in the National Dairy FARM Animal Care Manual, are in the final stages of an extensive review and revision process. After nearly a year of consultation throughout the industry, with farmers, veterinary experts, and cooperative staff, the three year-old animal care manual will be revised slightly to reflect the latest knowledge and best practices about proper dairy animal care. Revisions to the animal observation component also relied on analysis of over 360,000 animal observations collected through on-farm evaluations for FARM program over the last three years.

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NMPF RELEASE///PAGE TWO

The five step process consisted of the following:

**Step 1** – Initial revision and draft by the program’s Technical Working Group (TWG) in May 2012

- The TWG was composed of dairy producers, veterinarians, and animal care experts

**Step 2** – NMPF Animal Health & Well-being Committee Review (AHWC) in autumn 2012

- The NMPF AHWC is composed of dairy producers, veterinarians, and cooperative staff
- October 2012 – Review of initial TWG draft by Animal Health committee
- November 2012 – TWG made additional revisions in response to AHWC comments

**Step 3** – Industry Comment Period in winter 2012

- December 2012 – Distributed broadly to industry for comment, including state dairy producer groups, cooperatives, and proprietary processors and veterinary associations
- February 2013 – TWG made additional revisions in response to comments received during the industry comment period

**Step 4** – Review of TWG recommendations and final revisions by NMPF AHWC in March 2013

**Step 5** – Review and anticipated approval by NMPF Board of Directors in June 2013

If the NMPF Board approves the revisions in June, the newly-revised manual will be made available on the FARM website at [www.nationaldairyfarm.com](http://www.nationaldairyfarm.com).

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The National Milk Producers Federation, 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 30 cooperatives produce the majority of the U.S. milk supply, making NMPF the voice of more than 32,000 dairy producers on Capitol Hill and with government agencies. Visit [www.nmpf.org](http://www.nmpf.org) for more information.