



# News Release

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*“Connecting Cows, Cooperatives, Capitol Hill, and Consumers”*

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## **FARM Program Report Shows Continued Widespread Adoption of Animal Care Practices** *National Dairy FARM Program Quantifies Broad Use of Best Practices*

ARLINGTON, VA – Dairy farmers nationwide continue to demonstrate widespread adoption of industry standards that assure high-quality care for their animals, according to a report released today by the National Milk Producers Federation.

The summary report, issued annually, quantifies practices by farmers participating in the industry’s responsible care program, known as the National Dairy FARM Program (Farmers Assuring Responsible Management). A copy of the report can be [found online](#).

“The latest report shows dairy farmers continue to demonstrate their extensive commitment to the well-being of the animals in their care through adherence to the standards in the FARM program,” said Jamie Jonker, NMPF’s vice president of scientific and regulatory affairs. The report quantifies the results of more than 12,000 dairy farm evaluations conducted during the previous three years. All the data collected by second-party evaluators who visit each of those farms is catalogued, and provides a baseline of the breadth of adoption of the program’s care practices.

For example, the report found nearly 95 percent of farms enrolled in the program train their employees to properly move animals that cannot walk, and more than 98 percent train employees to handle calves with a minimum of stress. Other findings included:

- 99 percent of farms observe animals daily to identify health issues for early treatment;
- 93 percent develop protocols with veterinarians for dealing with common diseases, calving and animals with special needs;
- 92 percent train workers to recognize the need for animals to be euthanized.

At the same time, the report found some areas still need improvement. For example, 84 percent of farms in the program have a valid veterinarian-client relationship, and 84 percent also conduct annual training in animal care for employees. However, both of these areas have shown an increase in industry adoption, up from 80 percent and 83 percent, respectively, since the first annual report two years ago.

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Overall, according to the report, participation in the FARM Program increased to more than three-quarters of the nation's milk supply, up five percentage points from the previous year.

"The report shows that dairy farmers take their animal care responsibilities very seriously," said Jonker. "They're performing dozens of practices each day that increase the well-being of their animals."

Available to all U.S. dairy farmers in the United States, the FARM program is now in its fifth year. It is a voluntary, national set of guidelines designed to demonstrate farmers' commitment to outstanding animal care and a quality milk supply. Cooperatives, milk processors, and individual producers use the program to assure consumers that the dairy foods they purchase are produced with integrity.

Participants are given training materials and are evaluated by a veterinarian or another trained professional. Evaluators provide a status report and, if necessary, recommend areas for improvement.

Each year, a nationwide sample of dairy farms in the program is randomly selected for visits from third-party "verifiers" to assure that the observations recorded by veterinarians are valid. A certified auditing company, Validus, conducts the third-party verification process.

The third annual verification of the FARM program reflects adoption of select practices as of December 2013. As of this month, more than 60 cooperatives and milk processors participate in the program, as well as dozens of individual dairy producers.

Also today, NMPF released the new 2015 edition of its safe use manual for antibiotics and other animal drugs. The *Milk and Dairy Beef Drug Residue Prevention Manual* permits producers to quickly review those antibiotics approved for use with dairy animals. It can also be used to educate farm managers in how to avoid drug residues in milk and meat. The manual, [available online](#), is updated annually.

"Today, the use of antibiotics and other drugs in livestock is more intently scrutinized than ever," said Jonker. "To maintain consumer confidence, we must show we are using these medicines properly, legally, and judiciously. This manual shows dairy farmers' commitment to just that."

The residue prevention manual was sponsored by Elanco Animal Health, DSM Animal Nutrition and Health, Charm Sciences, IDEXX Laboratories and Zoetis. No government funds were used in its development. For more information on the FARM program, contact Jamie Jonker at (703) 243-6111 or visit the National Dairy FARM Program [website](#).

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 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. For more on NMPF's activities, visit our website at [www.nmpf.org](http://www.nmpf.org).