



Nutrition

NMPF Hails New Dietary Guidelines

The recently released [2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#) (DGA) “affirm the vital, unrivaled contribution made by dairy foods,” the National Milk Producers Federation said in a [statement](#), joining three other national dairy groups that praised the recommendations for reinforcing the need for daily dairy consumption.



Every five years, the federal government updates its advice on what Americans should eat. The most recent guidelines highlight the

need for Americans to increase their consumption of dairy products, as most people now get fewer than the three daily servings recommended for adults, adolescents and older children in most food patterns.

NMPF joined the National Dairy Council, the International Dairy Foods Association and the Milk Processor Education Program in praising the DGA’s continued recommendation to consume low-fat and fat-free dairy every day. The guidelines note that dairy helps reduce the risk of cardiovascular

disease, type 2 diabetes, certain types of cancer, overweight and obesity.

Controversy surrounded the development of this year’s guidelines, partly because the outside scientific advisers who prepared the initial recommendations also focused on so-called “sustainable diets,” seen by many as a platform to discourage meat consumption. However, the final DGA document did not address the issue, since federal officials felt that the nutrition-oriented guidelines were not the right place for such advice. However, as a result of the controversy, Congress mandated an outside study of how the DGA are written. The study, to be conducted by the National Academy of Medicine, is expected to begin soon.

The next round of dietary guidance, due in 2020 with preparations already underway, may represent an opportunity to reassess the benefits of higher-fat dairy. The vice chair of this year’s DGA advisory committee said publicly that some scientific research suggests the benefits of whole, reduced-fat milk and other dairy products, but that this science was not fully enough developed to be considered during the 2015 DGA reviews.

Contact: [Beth Briczinski](#)

Nutrition

NMPF Comments on Dairy Value in Food Fortification

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) should recognize the superiority of dairy nutrition over imitations like soy beverages when it gives guidance about fortifying foods, the National Milk Producers Federation said in February. In [comments](#) on a [draft guidance document](#) for adding nutrients such as calcium to foods and beverages, NMPF criticized FDA for language that seemed to promote soy beverages as the only option for people who are lactose intolerant.

This viewpoint contradicts the [2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#) (DGA), NMPF said, quoting: “Individuals who are lactose intolerant can choose low-lactose and

lactose-free dairy products.” NMPF urged FDA to modify its guidance “to clarify that dairy should be the first option for lactose-intolerant individuals.” One of the federal departments issuing the DGA is Health and Human Services, of which FDA is a part.

NMPF also said FDA’s guidance should reflect the fact that calcium added through fortification may be less bioavailable than the calcium found naturally in milk, and therefore may benefit consumers less than the same amount of calcium in milk.

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NMPF Board Approves Changes to National Dairy FARM Program



On March 8, the National Milk Producers Federation Board of Directors [approved changes](#) to the National Dairy FARM (Farmers Assuring Responsible Management) Program™ to strengthen the effectiveness and credibility of its animal care standards.

Revisions to the [FARM Animal Care Program](#) occur every three years. They are based on input from farmers, veterinarians and others involved in the FARM Program’s Technical Writing Group and NMPF’s Animal Health and Wellbeing Committee,

as well as recommendations received through a public comment period. The current revision process began in May 2015. The approved updates will be reflected in Version 3.0 of the program when it is implemented January 1, 2017.

One outcome of the revisions is a greater emphasis on accountability among program participants. The advisory committees identified several FARM Program guidelines for heightened focus and attention. Such criteria include a greater emphasis on employee training, having a documented Veterinarian-Client-Patient Relationship, updated protocols on euthanasia and non-ambulatory cattle, and the cessation of tail docking.

Contact: [Emily Meredith](#) or [Jamie Jonker](#)



National Dairy FARM Program Launches Mobile Application

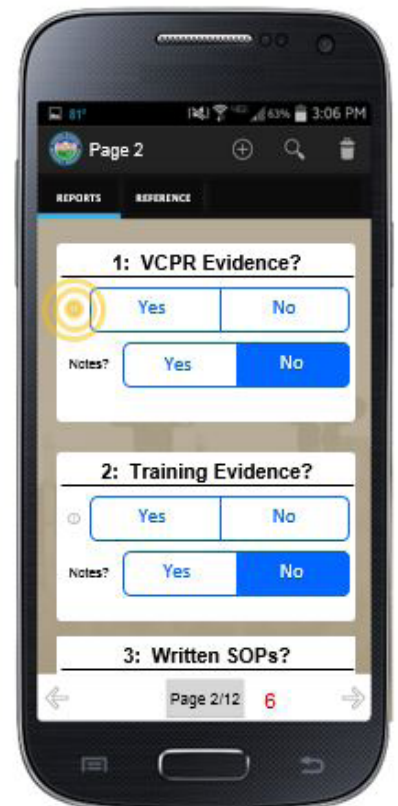
Since the National Dairy FARM Program began in 2009, more than 38,000 evaluations have been performed by more than 370 dedicated FARM Program evaluators using pencil and paper. FARM now has a custom mobile app, built using the [AgConnect®](#) platform, to allow evaluators, cooperatives and industry associations to use the program digitally with more ease and flexibility. [The Institute for Infectious Animal Diseases](#), the Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Center of Excellence, and the [Texas Center for Applied Technology](#), a research center within the Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station, worked together to create the software program.

New features of the mobile app include:

- FARM Evaluation will automatically save after each question is answered, regardless of whether the user has working cell service or Internet connection;
- Forms will submit automatically once user is back in cellular service range or connected to Internet;
- Automatically computes the minimal animal observations by animal type based on herd profile;
- Auto-calculates observation score percentages and allows the option to manually answer observation-related questions; and
- Allows Evaluators to input photos and notes to review later.

The application is available on both the [Apple App Store®](#) and [Google Play Store®](#) by searching “Dairy FARM Mobile.” Only FARM Program-certified evaluators/trainers have account credentials to utilize the app and submit evaluations.

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BQA Partners with National Dairy FARM Program



To strengthen the ongoing partnership between the dairy and beef segments of the cattle industry on animal care issues, the National Milk Producers Federation and the beef checkoff-funded [Beef Quality Assurance](#)

program will jointly offer more training opportunities for farmers and ranchers in 2016. NMPF has been working for the past year on identifying areas where its [Farmers Assuring Responsible Management \(FARM\) Program](#) can further coordinate with the [Dairy Beef Quality Assurance \(BQA\) Program](#), managed by the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association on behalf of the beef checkoff.

Both programs focus on educating cattle producers about the best practices in animal care to assure consumers that their meat and milk comes from animals that receive optimal care throughout the animals’ lives.

In January, the BQA Advisory Board approved an addition to its program whereby any dairy producer evaluated using the FARM Animal Care Program’s Version 3.0 (starting January 2017) will also receive BQA certification. BQA will also work with FARM to create training opportunities for dairy producers to preserve the beef quality of their cows. These training sessions will focus on stockmanship, residue prevention and transportation. Many of these training opportunities will be available at the state level and implemented by the BQA state coordinators.

Contact: [Emily Meredith](#) or [Ryan Bennett](#)

First 2014 Dairy NAHMS Report Released

In March, the [USDA’s National Animal Health Monitoring System \(NAHMS\)](#) released [Dairy Cattle Management Practices in the United States, 2014](#), the first report from its Dairy 2014 study. Dairy 2014 is NAHMS sixth study of the U.S. dairy industry. The study was conducted in 17 of the nation’s major dairy states and represents 76.7 percent of U.S. dairy operations and 80.3 percent of U.S. dairy cows. USDA will release additional reports in the next year.

A few highlights of the report include:

- Rolling herd average (RHA) milk production was 19,932 lb./cow. RHA milk production for grazing and organic operations was similar (14,513 and 14,758 lb./cow, respectively).
- Overall, 47.5 percent of operations had accessed the Internet for dairy information during 2013. Internet use

generally increased as herd size increased, with 31.6 percent of very small operations (fewer than 30 cows) accessing the Internet for dairy information compared with 89.7 percent of large operations (500 or more cows).

- The percentage of operations that administered vaccines to cows increased as herd size increased. Overall, 73.8 percent of operations administered any vaccine to cows. More than half of operations administered vaccines against BVD (68.0 percent), infectious bovine rhinotracheitis (60.2 percent), parainfluenza type 3 (55.8 percent), bovine respiratory syncytial virus (54.8 percent), or leptospirosis (51.5 percent).

Contact: [Jamie Jonker](#)

USDA Publishes Final Rule for Conservation Stewardship Program

On March 10, USDA published a final rule on the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), USDA’s largest conservation program that helps agricultural producers voluntarily improve the health and productivity of private and tribal working lands. CSP was reauthorized in the 2014 Farm Bill and is administered through USDA’s [Natural Resources Conservation Service](#).

payment for all participants to \$1,500 per year, provides increased flexibility for adopting conservation activities and enhancements, and clarifies provisions related to how land transfers affect program participation.

The final rule responded to public input and makes permanent the changes that were made in the interim final rule. Significantly, the [final rule](#) raises the minimum contract

The CSP is USDA’s largest conservation program by acreage. Through CSP, USDA has provided more than \$4 billion since 2009 in assistance to farmers, ranchers and forest managers to enhance conservation on more than 70 million acres.

Contact: [Jamie Jonker](#)



Animal Health

House Ag Livestock, Foreign Agriculture Subcommittee Holds FMD Hearing



The House Agriculture Livestock and Foreign Agriculture Subcommittee [held a hearing](#) in February to examine the preparedness of the United States in the event of the introduction of foot and mouth disease (FMD) into the country. The hearing included a [panel of witnesses](#) who shared what steps have been taken, and what still needs to be done to establish an FMD vaccine

stockpile deployable within 24 hours of an outbreak. [FMD](#) is a highly contagious viral disease that causes illness in cows, pigs, sheep, goats and other animals with cloven hooves. However it is not a human health concern.

If an FMD outbreak were to occur in the United States, USDA has established a [response plan](#) including the use of vaccine in large-scale outbreaks. Currently, the amount of vaccine available at the North American FMD Vaccine Bank is insufficient for vaccinate-to-live scenarios. NMPF supports a fully functional government-funded FMD vaccine bank with sufficient quantities for vaccinate-to-live scenarios.

Contact: [Jamie Jonker](#)

Animal Health

USDA SACAH Discusses FMD Preparedness, Other Important Topics

The USDA [Secretary's Advisory Committee on Animal Health](#) (SACAH) met February 23-25 in Dallas, Texas. The SACAH advises the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture on matters of animal health and broader issues of public concern. Among the variety of topics discussed by the committee was the importance of a fully functional foot and mouth disease (FMD) vaccine bank including the need for vaccinate-to-live strategies. Currently, if a large-scale FMD outbreak were to occur in the United States, there would be a struggle to obtain sufficient quantities of FMD vaccine in

a timely manner. South Korea faced such a challenge during its most recent FMD outbreak.

Additional discussion occurred on emerging animal diseases, animal identification, antimicrobial resistance and other animal diseases. Presentations from the meeting are available [online](#).

Contact: [Jamie Jonker](#)

Animal Health

FDA Finalizes Guidance to Ensure Safety of Animal Feed on the Farm

On March 9, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration issued a final version of [Guidance for Industry #203 Ensuring the Safety of Animal Feed Maintained and Fed On-Farm](#). The guidance outlines steps animal producers can take to identify and prevent feed contaminants that are sometimes present in the farm production environment and could jeopardize the health of farm animals and the safety of human food derived from the animals. The guidance considers the following principles and practices as means of ensuring the safety of the feed given to animals:



- Know what feed contaminants may be present in your animals' feed and the measures known to prevent such contaminants from becoming unacceptable feed risks;
- Obtain feed from safe and reliable sources;
- Recognize unexpected changes in the feed at your farm (e.g., changes in color, smell, texture, or appearance);
- Know where in your animal production system(s) unacceptable feed risks may occur;
- Monitor animal feed products for contaminants during receiving, holding, and handling; and,

- Be aware that other actions, such as limiting access to the premises to authorized personnel, following feed labeling directions, proper personnel training, and sampling and testing of feed can help ensure feed safety.

Contact: [Jamie Jonker](#)



Animal Health

USDA Releases Updated TB, Brucellosis Eradication Program Standards

USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) released a proposal on December 16 to update the [brucellosis and bovine tuberculosis](#) (TB) eradication program regulations. Under the proposed rule, states and tribal nations would no longer be categorized by the disease prevalence in their state, and APHIS would no longer rely solely on whole-herd depopulation. Instead, APHIS has proposed to establish standards for disease surveillance, epidemiological investigations and affected herd management. States and tribes would develop and implement an animal health plan that outlines how they will meet those standards. States and tribes would be categorized by whether they have an animal health plan, whether APHIS has approved this plan and whether they are following the activities outlined in their plan. APHIS

would also outline requirements for both interstate movements and imports of cattle, bison and captive cervids, as well as conditions for approving tests, testing laboratories and testers.

These proposed revisions also address strategies when a herd is found to be infected. APHIS believes using depopulation as the only method of control is no longer feasible. Instead, APHIS concludes that a test-and-remove strategy is a cost-effective alternative for controlling these diseases. In this strategy, infected herds are tested on a periodic basis and any animals that test positive are removed from the herd. Comments are due May 16.

Contact: [Jamie Jonker](#)

Animal Health

Management of Standards for Hazardous Waste Pharmaceuticals

On December 23, NMPF [submitted comments](#) to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on the proposed regulation for "[Management of Standards for Hazardous Waste Pharmaceuticals](#)."

EPA regulates the disposal of some pharmaceuticals as hazardous waste under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) when discarded. For a variety of reasons, healthcare facilities (as defined by EPA) that generate hazardous waste pharmaceuticals, as well as associated facilities, have reported difficulties complying with the Subtitle C hazardous waste regulations. EPA proposed to revise the regulations to improve the management and disposal of hazardous waste pharmaceuticals and tailor them to address the specific issues that hospitals, pharmacies and other healthcare facilities face. The revisions were also intended to clarify the regulation of the reverse distribution mechanism used by healthcare facilities for the management of unused and/or

expired pharmaceuticals.

While EPA does not specifically mention dairy (or other livestock) farms as included in the proposed regulation, EPA states "Other types of entities not listed could also be affected." NMPF commented that EPA should "clearly exempt dairy farms and agricultural production facilities from the healthcare facility definition of entities affected by the proposed rule for management standards for hazardous waste pharmaceuticals." NMPF believes it would be inappropriate for EPA to regulate the disposal of pharmaceuticals on dairy farms much as EPA will not require households to be regulated. EPA states this about households: "The Agency would like to emphasize that the regulatory requirements in this proposed rule do not apply to households or to household pharmaceutical collection and take-back events and programs."

Contact: [Jamie Jonker](#)



Waters of the U.S. Update

On February 22, the [U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit](#) concluded that it has jurisdiction to review challenges to the Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) Final Rule. The Sixth Circuit rejected arguments that proper jurisdiction to review challenges to the WOTUS rule lies in federal district courts. Instead, two of the three judges on the panel concluded that applicable precedent provided the Sixth Circuit jurisdiction to hear the consolidated challenges to the WOTUS rule. Given the Sixth Circuit's

prior decision to stay the rule, pending resolution of the jurisdictional challenge, this would indicate the rule exceeds the scope of the Clean Water Act or is not a "logical outgrowth" of the proposed rule published in the Federal Register. This same court ordered a nationwide ["stay" of implementation](#) of the WOTUS Final Rule on October 9.

Contact: [Jamie Jonker](#) or [Ryan Bennett](#)

Voluntary Nutrient Trading in Maryland

Last fall, Maryland officials expressed interest in creating a nutrient trading program that could help clean up the Chesapeake Bay. The Chesapeake Bay is one of the nation's largest estuaries and home to more than 15 million people. However, pollution levels in the bay have been increasing in recent decades. Chief among these pollutants are the botanical nutrients nitrogen and phosphorus.

The sources of these nutrients include wastewater treatment facilities, urban storm sewer systems, agriculture and air deposition. Despite decades of efforts to clean up the bay, the nutrient reductions needed have fallen short of the goals. Gov. Larry Hogan, the Maryland Department of Agriculture and the Maryland Department of the Environment are all united in the belief that if they engage

the agriculture community, they can achieve the nutrient reductions needed to clean up the bay.

NMPF strongly supports the concept of nutrient trading and applauds Maryland officials for having the foresight to propose a program in the state of Maryland. It will set a precedent that other states and watersheds can and will follow to improve their water quality. While NMPF supports the Maryland program, [comments](#) were filed in January asking that they expand eligible trading to include technology-based nutrient recovery trades and provide for long-term trading of 10 years or more. NMPF believes that Maryland officials are open to such changes and will actively work with them in the months ahead.

Contact: [Clay Detlefsen](#)



NMPF Accepting Applications for 2016 Scholarship Program

Each year, the National Milk Producers Federation offers scholarships to qualified graduate students (enrolled in Master's or Ph.D. programs) who are actively pursuing dairy-related fields of research that are of immediate interest to NMPF member cooperatives. Graduate students pursuing research of direct benefit to the dairy industry are encouraged to submit an application. Applicants do not need to be members of NMPF to qualify.

To qualify for an NMPF Scholarship, applicants must be currently enrolled in a graduate degree program in the United States and must follow all instructions in the [application form](#).

[\(PDF\)](#). Completed applications will consist of an application package (an information form, a brief research summary and a current resume) and two letters of recommendation. All application materials should be emailed to [Beth Briczinski](#).

Materials must be received no later than **April 8, 2016**. Scholarship recipients will be selected by the NMPF Board of Directors in June 2016 and will be notified soon afterwards. Payment will be made to coincide with the start of the 2016-17 academic year.

Contact: [Beth Briczinski](#)

Upcoming Events

[ADSA Large Herd Management Conference](#)

Oakbrook, Illinois

May 1-4, 2016

[Animal Ag Alliance Stakeholder Summit](#)

Arlington, Virginia

May 5-6, 2016

[Dairy Sustainability Forum](#)

Chicago, Illinois

May 11-12, 2016

[NMPF June Board Meeting](#)

Arlington, Virginia

June 6-8, 2016

About NMPF



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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 cooperatives produce the majority of the U.S. milk supply, making NMPF the voice of dairy producers on Capitol Hill and with government agencies.

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