

ACME Co-op Illustration

This is a fictitious illustration of how a co-op might implement the principles and guidelines established by the National Dairy Animal Well-Being Coalition. The Acme Co-op does not exist and individual co-ops may elect to implement the principles and guidelines in other ways. This example is for illustration purposes only.

The management team at Acme Dairy Cooperative was proud of the quality control system they had in place. It helped assure their customers a consistent supply of high quality milk and it provided clear guidance to co-op members on what type of performance was expected on the farm. Over the past few years they became increasingly aware of animal well-being concerns and established their own internal animal welfare program.

When they first heard about the work of the National Dairy Animal Well-Being Coalition they were unsure about what it meant and how it would work with their program. They had already invested significant resources in developing the well-being elements of their quality control system and they were concerned about having to change, or add unnecessary cost.

After reviewing the principles and guidelines they realized that there might be value in having a consistent level of well-being assurance across the industry that could be implemented within the existing plans and programs of individual co-ops.

They also found the guidelines helpful in improving their well-being program. They felt the Acme program was consistent with the National Dairy Animal Well-Being principles in the areas of nutrition, animal health, handling management and transportation and management, but could use some improvement in housing and facilities. These improvements helped them adjust stocking density and increased producer awareness of lameness issues. They also knew they would have to develop a third party oversight system to comply.

The Acme field service personnel were currently responsible for working with producers to implement the Acme well-being program. However, because the field service personnel had a vested interest in the outcome of the program, they did not qualify as third party oversight.

After reviewing the many options available to them, the Acme management team decided to audit a statistically valid sample of their farms to ensure their dairy animal well-being program was working. Auditing a sample provided the credibility their customers were looking for, and it was both workable and affordable for the co-op and producers.

At the end of the day, the Acme Dairy Cooperative management team felt the National Dairy Animal Well-Being Initiative helped them demonstrate their commitment to animal well-being and gave them one more opportunity to discuss their quality assurance program with both producers and customers.

Sam Strongbones, member relations manager for ACME co-op, downloaded the draft principles and guidelines document and circulated it to the ACME membership. In his correspondence, Sam asked

members to provide him with their feedback by April 7, 2008 stating that he will compile the comments he receives by then and will forward to the Coalition.

Sam also plans to provide a review period of the principles and guidelines document at the upcoming membership meeting.