



Event Title: Got Misery?

Open Letter to Dairy Managers

In a recent video (November 2014) animal activists attack a cheese processor because of video footage at a Wisconsin dairy farm. Images captured create the false impression that all food producers abuse their animals (including dairies). The scenes on the video are not typical of a dairy that respects their cows (not beating or causing intentional pain to their animals). Workers in the video exemplify behavior of untrained animal handlers with a poor attitude towards animal husbandry.

Project “In Charge” principles were violated as no responsible person appeared to be in charge to stop the animal treatments/violations. Common dairy care guidelines and standards appear to be nonexistent while being filmed.

Use the example of this “event” to pull your management team together, Google the video clips on YouTube (Got Misery?) and follow the discussion guide. The results will lead to an evaluation of your supervision, employee training and protocols in place on your dairy.

DQ Center

Attitude

Inadequate interviews and hiring practices allows your dairy to employ workers who have bad attitudes towards livestock. The lack of backgrounding and supervision of a new hire puts your dairy at risk for animal welfare issues. A poor attitude coupled with the lack of training and inexperience creates a ticking time bomb. Emotions take over leading to unacceptable responses and practices. Aggression towards animals is never the answer. Employees’ actions are a direct reflection on the manager, hiring practices, training for animal handling and/or absence of supervision. Employees need to know job descriptions and expectations, and to be held accountable for their actions.

Treating cows with dignity

The video displays several actions that could have been “set up” for the undercover camera to capture. Several workers were present and yet none had the courage to step up and stop the actions. The strength of your management team is supported by your workers and their dedication to the dairy. An attitude of respect for the cows demonstrates a mind-set and commitment to the dairy and the owner of the dairy.

Food Production

Activists seek out opportunities to capture alleged or real animal abuse on videos to erode the trust the consumers have in animal food production. It is no mistake that the animal abuse video was tied to a major cheese processor to generate the maximum results impact on cheese consumption. Everyone has a brand. A brand can be positive with consumers or if animal abuse occurs, the dairy’s brand is negative.

Transparency

The concept of “seeing is believing” hits a home run every time with consumers. Be alert to what is going on at your dairy. Be aware that your daily acceptable experiences are being monitored by people generations removed from production agriculture. Practices that are questionable should be discussed with your veterinarian to ensure that the animal does not endure pain when it should be prevented or the practices discontinued.

MEMO: Got Misery?



To: Middle Managers

Every dairy is “in charge” of the animal care provided to every animal.

Our dairy has designated you as a “middle manager” because of your respect for our animals and your ability to lead other employees.

About the video. Using hidden cameras may meet the activists’ goal to raise money at our expense. Cameras can be everywhere.

Key points for our staff when under your direction:

- This is serious! - The media has yet again another example of alleged animal abuse to expose consumers to poor animal care. These examples harm the image of dairies, employees and food groups – ultimately reduce demand for milk.
- Animal abuse is illegal! - The video staged or not - depicts abusive practices that appear unprovoked. Animals must be treated with dignity. Do you have a copy of your state’s animal care laws? All states have them.
- The activist group attacked the cheese market - The company, Great Lakes Cheese, is committed to and is recognized as meeting high quality standards. Brand protection is important and needs to start at the Farm. Mercy for Animals wants to change the meaning of Great Lakes Cheese’s brand.
- Example of a larger issue! - There can be fault found on every dairy. Human and animal behaviors are influenced by daily environments, needs, and activity levels. Be alert to protect your dairy and employees from procedural drift from accepted practices to practices that are not acceptable.
- Our dairy takes this issue seriously! - Food production is at risk every time an animal abuse video is released. Scenes erode and eat away at the trust and confidence consumers have in our right to eat animals. Don’t encourage people with little or no knowledge of food production practices to instigate laws and standards for you at your dairy.

Scheduled meeting with managers: _____

Date: _____

Time: _____

Who participates: _____