 THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

## Animal Welfare Assessments and Audits in the US

Katy Proudfoot, PhD  
The Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine

## Preparing for **Animal Welfare** Assessments and Audits

## What is Animal Welfare?

### World Organization for Animal Health (OIE)

Animal welfare means how an animal is coping with the conditions in which it lives.

An animal is in a good state of welfare if (as indicated by scientific evidence) it is healthy, comfortable, well nourished, safe, able to express innate behavior, and if it is not suffering from unpleasant states such as pain, fear, and distress.

### World Organization for Animal Health (OIE)

Animal welfare means how an animal is coping with the conditions in which it lives.

An animal is in a good state of welfare if (as indicated by scientific evidence) it is **healthy, comfortable, well nourished, safe**, able to express innate behavior, and if it is not suffering from unpleasant states such as pain, fear, and distress.

### World Organization for Animal Health (OIE)

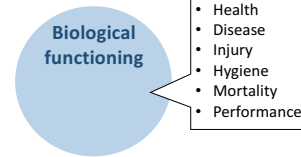
Animal welfare means how an animal is coping with the conditions in which it lives.

An animal is in a good state of welfare if (as indicated by scientific evidence) it is healthy, comfortable, well nourished, safe, **able to express innate behavior**, and if it is not suffering from unpleasant states such as pain, fear, and distress.

### World Organization for Animal Health (OIE)

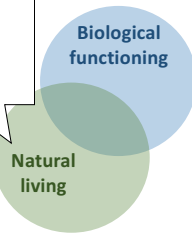
Animal welfare means how an animal is coping with the conditions in which it lives.

An animal is in a good state of welfare if (as indicated by scientific evidence) it is healthy, comfortable, well nourished, safe, able to express innate behavior, and if it is not suffering from **unpleasant states such as pain, fear, and distress.**

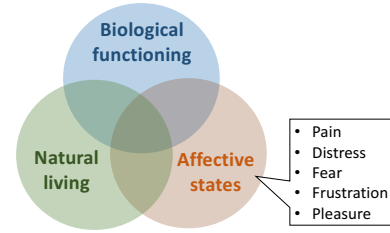


Fraser et al., 1997. Animal Welfare. 6:187-205

- Environment
- Space allowance
- Socializing
- Highly motivated behavior



Fraser et al., 1997. Animal Welfare. 6:187-205



Fraser et al., 1997. Animal Welfare. 6:187-205

What are dairy cow welfare concerns?

**Calf management** Injuries  
 Restriction of behaviors Cow comfort  
 Stockmanship **Lameness** On-farm mortality  
 Disease Cull cow management  
**Painful procedures**



## Dairy Industry

Ventura et al., 2015; the size of the word does not necessarily mean higher importance

**Safe environment** Respect  
 Natural behaviors Low stress and fear  
 Adequate rest Pasture access **Absence of pain**  
 Companions Food and water access  
**Humane care**



**Citizens and consumers**

Ventura et al., 2016, the size of the word does not necessarily mean higher importance

Preparing for Animal Welfare Assessments and Audits

What are welfare assessments and audits?

- Programs developed to help assure the public that farm animals are well cared for in the US
- Used in the dairy, swine, beef and poultry industries
- Catered to measure specific animal welfare concerns for each species

Why do they exist?

- **Consumers and citizens** care about where their food comes from, and are looking for transparency
- **Retailers** are listening to consumers
- **Industry** groups are becoming proactive about animal welfare

What animal welfare programs are out there for dairy cows?



### 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Audits




### 2<sup>nd</sup> Party Assessments



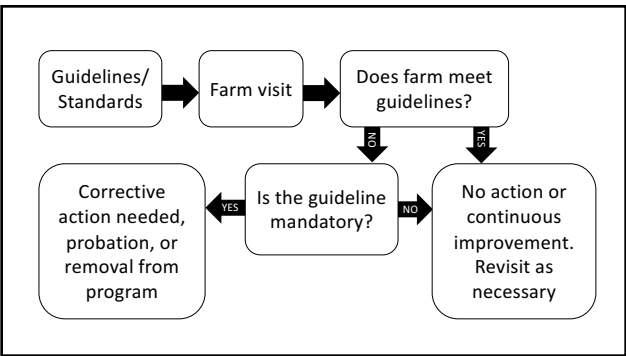
### Audit vs. Assessment

**Audit** = Often associated with certification and stricter criteria. Catered to niche markets.

**Assessment** = Not usually associated with certification and less strict criteria. Catered toward a majority of dairies in the US.




How do the programs work?



Who comes up with the guidelines/standards?

### Who comes up with guidelines/standards?

- Producers
- Scientists
- Veterinarians
- Animal advocacy groups
- Industry reps



Who does the on-farm evaluation?



**2<sup>nd</sup> party** = can have financial tie or relationship to farm (e.g., veterinarian, co-op field staff, extension educator, etc)

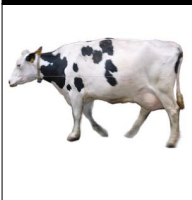
**3<sup>rd</sup> party** = cannot have a financial tie or relationship with the farm

What does the farm visit look like?

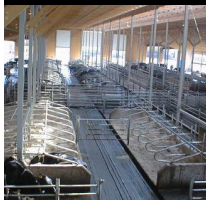
1. Usually call you well in advance to schedule a good day for a visit (depending on program)
2. On the day of the visit, the evaluator/auditor will spend time with farm manager/owner introducing the program and asking general management questions (~1 h)
3. On-farm evaluation of animals and facilities (~2-3 h)
4. Closing discussion with farm manager/owner about what was found and how to improve (~30 min)

What do they measure on-farm?

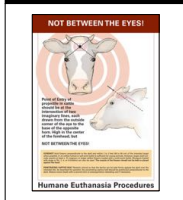
**Animals**



**Resources**



**Protocols**



Animal-based measures

Animal-based measures for dairy cows

1. Lameness/locomotion score
2. Body condition score
3. Hock/knee lesion score
4. Hygiene score

Lameness Scoring

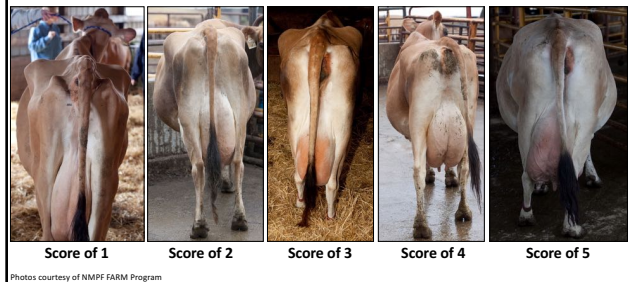
- 1 = Normal Gait:** no limping
- 2 = Moderately Lame:** limps, but places weight on limb
- 3 = Severely Lame:** definite limp, does not place weight on limb

Body Condition Scoring

**BCS Scale:**

- 1 = Gaunt;** no fatty tissue around tail head
- 2 = Thin;** shallow cavity around tail head
- 3 = Good condition**
- 4 = No depression in loin;** short ribs cannot be felt
- 5 = Thick layer of fatty tissue** around short ribs

Body Condition Scoring



Hygiene Scoring



Hock and Knee Lesion Scoring



What hock/knee lesion score?



What hygiene and BCS?



Photos courtesy of NMPF FARM Program

What hygiene and BCS?



Photos courtesy of NMPF FARM Program

Resource-based measures

Resource-based measures for dairy cows

1. Access to feed and water
2. Protection from heat and cold
3. Comfort and cleanliness
4. Special needs housing

Food and water



### Protection from heat and cold



### Comfort and cleanliness



### Special needs housing



Photos courtesy of NMPP FARM Program

### Protocol-based measures

### Protocol-based measures for dairy cows

1. Evidence of a Vet-Client-Patient-Relationship (VCPR)
2. Evidence of stockmanship training
3. Zero-tolerance policy for animal abuse
4. Written herd health protocols

### Protocol-based measures

- Evidence of a Veterinary Client Patient Relationship (VCPR)

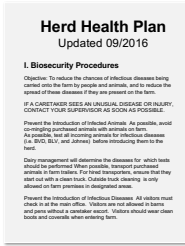


Protocol-based measures



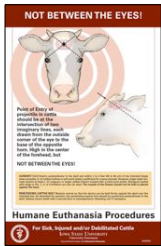
- Evidence of stockmanship training, and/or signed cattle ethics agreement with all employees

Protocol-based measures



- Herd health plan updated annually and signed off by veterinarian

Herd Health Plan



- Newborn care
- Preventive medicine (vaccinations)
- Pain management
- Disease detection and treatment
- Euthanasia decision and method
- Milking procedures/mastitis prevention
- Lameness prevention
- Non-ambulatory animals

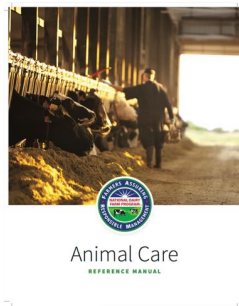
Case example: The National Dairy F.A.R.M. Program Version 3.0

[www.nationaldairyfarm.com](http://www.nationaldairyfarm.com)

F.A.R.M.

2<sup>nd</sup> party assessment created by National Milk Producers Association (NMPF) with support from Dairy Management Inc. (DMI)

Technical Writing Group with representation from veterinarians, co-ops, processors, dairy organizations and universities



Mandatory Criteria (new in 3.0)

- 1) Documented Veterinary Client/Patient Relationship



Mandatory Criteria (new in 3.0)

- 1) Documented Veterinary Client/Patient Relationship
- 2) All employees sign Dairy Cattle Care and Ethics Agreement

**Includes evidence of stockmanship training (e.g., in-person training and/or online video training like Merck DairyCare365)**

The image shows a form titled "Dairy Cattle Care Ethics and Training Agreement". It includes fields for Employee Name, Farm Name, Farm Owner/Manager, and Farm Owner/Manager Phone Number. Below these fields is the "Dairy Cattle Care Ethics Agreement" text, which states that the employee agrees to the highest standards of care and ethics, including no tail docking after January 1, 2017. There are also fields for Signature and Date.

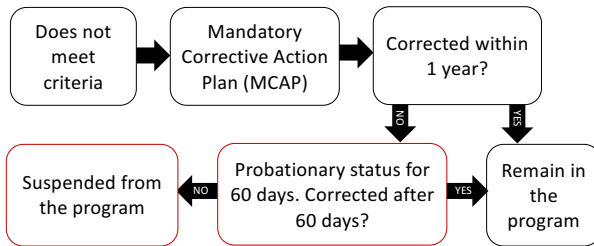
Mandatory Criteria (new in 3.0)

- 1) Documented Vet-Client-Patient-Relationship (VCPR)
- 2) All employees sign Dairy Cattle Care and Ethics Agreement
- 3) No tail docking after January 1, 2017



<http://harvestpublicmedia.org>

Mandatory Criteria (new in 3.0)



Continuous Improvement Criteria (new in 3.0)

- 1) Written Herd Health Plan

Templates are available online  
<http://www.nationaldairyfarm.com/resource-library>

The image shows a form titled "Herd Health Plan". It includes sections for "Employee Training" and "Daily Observation". The "Employee Training" section lists requirements for training on animal care, safety, and biosecurity. The "Daily Observation" section lists requirements for daily observation of the herd, including checking for signs of illness, injury, and lameness. There is also a section for "Animal Health Product Storage and Administration".

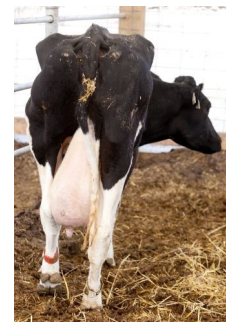
Continuous Improvement Criteria (new in 3.0)

- 1) Written Herd Health Plan
- 2) Meet criteria for lameness, hock lesions and body condition scoring

This is a duplicate of the "Herd Health Plan" form shown in the previous slide.

Lameness

**95% of lactating and dry cows score a 2 or less**



### Hock/knee Lesions

95% of lactating and dry cows score a 2 or less



### Body Condition

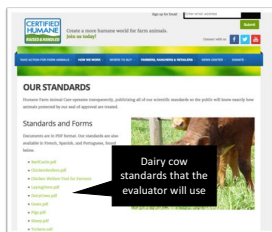
99% of all animals score a 2 or more



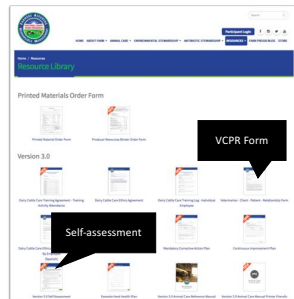
## Preparing for Animal Welfare Assessments and Audits

How to prepare yourself (or your clients) for an animal welfare audit or assessment... in 5 easy steps

### 1. Google the program



<http://certifiedhumane.org/how-we-work/our-standards/>



<http://www.nationaldairyfarm.com/resource-library>

### 2. Develop and VCPR and write down herd health protocols



<http://www.nationaldairyfarm.com/resource-library>

3. Stop tail-docking

**Making the Switch**  
 Switch Training

**Making the Switch**  
 Facility Management

4. Review and update stockmanship training

**Upper Midwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center**

**Merck DairyCare365**

5. Develop a zero-tolerance policy for abuse

**SEE IT? STOP IT!**

**FARMERS CONSUMERS MATERIALS**

**Farmers care more about the well-being of their animals than anyone else.**

Join #StopIt as an advocate to promote those who work around animals with compassion. It's immediately report any instances of animal abuse, neglect, harm or mistreatment. The #StopIt app farmers control their obligation to give animals care and their commitment to ensure those in contact with their animals do the same.

<http://www.seestopit.org/>

Questions?