



**Dairy Farmers
of Canada**



**Les Producteurs laitiers
du Canada**

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

Dairy Farmers of Canada initiates development of on-farm assessment program

OTTAWA, Feb. 1, 2012 - Dairy Farmers of Canada (DFC) is pleased to announce that it has initiated the development of an on-farm animal care assessment program. The program will be based on the dairy Code of Practice, and will test pilot a draft Animal Care Assessment Model (ACAM) being developed through the National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC).

“Our dairy Code is seen around the world as proactive and ambitious. The development of an assessment program is a great opportunity to build on the strength of our Code through a tool that will allow dairy farmers to demonstrate our commitment to top-notch animal care and welfare,” explains Ron Maynard, dairy farmer and DFC representative.

The development of a dairy animal care assessment program provides a practical opportunity to test pilot the draft ACAM. The ACAM will establish a consistent and credible process for developing animal care assessment programs that demonstrate adherence to the Codes of Practice. The Codes of Practice are nationally developed guidelines for the care and handling of farm animals. They serve as our national understanding of animal care requirements and recommended best practices.

This first phase of the dairy assessment pilot project will focus on the program content - determining what to assess and the assessment measures to use.

The program content will be developed with input from a diversity of stakeholders, such as farmers, milk processors, animal welfare advocates, researchers, extension specialists, veterinarians, and the retail and foodservice sector. “By bringing together the many stakeholders that share an interest in animal care assessment on dairy farms, we are better able to build consensus and achieve a credible, science-based program that is practical and sustainable for farmers,” says Maynard.

Geoff Urton, BC SPCA’s Animal Welfare Manager and national lead on farm animal initiatives for the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies, supports the Codes and the development of on-farm assessment programs. “The Codes aren’t an end-point, they’re a mid-point. The Codes are providing, with the foundation we have through NFACC’s Code Development Process, an excellent frame. But we need to keep building on that frame to actually provide the assurance that animals are being treated according to acceptable standards on farms,” says Urton. “I congratulate the industry associations that have made steps in that direction already.

More information about Codes of Practice and the ACAM is available online at www.nfacc.ca.

About NFACC

NFACC is a collaborative partnership of diverse stakeholders created in 2005 to share information and work together on farm animal care and welfare. It is the national lead for farm animal care issues in Canada. NFACC would like to acknowledge the Canadian Animal Health Coalition (CAHC) for their role in securing funding for this project. For more information about NFACC, visit www.nfacc.ca.

About DFC

Run for producers by producers, Dairy Farmers of Canada is the national policy, lobbying and promotional organization representing dairy farmers on Canada's 12,965 dairy farms. DFC strives to create stable conditions for the Canadian dairy industry, today and in the future. It works to maintain policies that foster the viability of Canadian dairy producers and promote dairy products and their health benefits.

Funding for the Addressing Domestic and International Market Expectations Relative to Farm Animal Welfare project has been provided by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada through the Agricultural Flexibility Fund, as part of Canada's Economic Action Plan.

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