

Update on Dairy HR Training & Safety Programs

G. Robert Hagevoort, Ph.D.

New Mexico State University, Clovis, NM

Email: dairydoc@ad.nmsu.edu

INTRODUCTION

It has been our intent over the last several years to develop a Comprehensive Dairy Safety Training program using video material categorically highlighting the safety concerns on typical open lot dairies in the Southwestern US. The material visually trains the observer on how to avoid risks and provide interventions. The overall goal is to empower employees with a better understanding of animals, animal behavior, equipment, and equipment safety; all in order to reduce and better manage risk factors.

A VISUAL TRAINING PROGRAM

In this effort we have developed two consecutive DVDs for on dairy training purposes entitled Considering Human and Animal Safety: Dairy Safety Training for Dairy Producers I and II. The format allows supervisors and managers the opportunity to establish safety protocols for their individual farms. The program is based on the notion that well trained workers have high regards for their own safety as well as the safety of others and the safety and well-being of the animals for which they provide. The program can be regarded as an essential part of an overall Quality Assurance Program. The training raises awareness of unsafe or potentially harmful working conditions; which with early detection may take minimal correctional action. By presenting guidelines on how to safely handle dairy cows in various common situations on the dairy farm, as well as how to work with heavy equipment in a safe manner, management can train both new and current

employees. Emphasis is put on understanding animal behavior as the basis for safely working with and around animals. A menu option allows for viewing in either English or Spanish.

The first DVD was released in early 2011. Copies were distributed to producers in Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico and Arizona. In addition all attendees of the 2011 Western Dairy Management Conference were provided with a copy. To date, in excess of 6,000 copies have been distributed to producers and allied industry. The International Refugee Committee (IRC New Roots Program, <http://www.rescue.org/news/photo-essays/new-roots>) has requested permission to translate the DVD into other languages such as Burmese, to be incorporated into training of refugees, which are to be placed on dairy operations in the U.S.



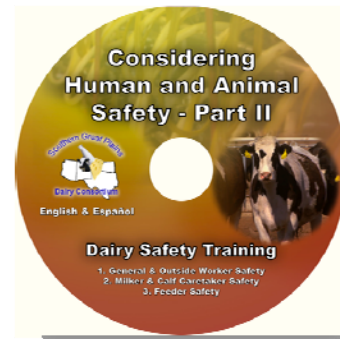
A second DVD aimed at particular positions on the dairy, details specific tasks such as Outside Worker Safety, Milker and Calf Caretaker Safety and Feeder Safety was released in 2012. It was distributed to producers in New Mexico, Texas, and

Arizona; as well as to all attendants of the 2013 Western Dairy Management Conference. To date, in excess of 3,000 copies have been distributed to producers and allied industry.

Specific areas covered in the Considering Human and Animal Safety DVDs are:

- Animal handling in treatment chutes
- ATV safety
- Cattle flight zone
- Cattle point of balance
- Chemical safety
- Eye and ear protection
- Milking barn safety
- Moving cattle safely
- Properly immobilizing cattle
- PTO Safety
- Safety around bulls
- Safety around electricity
- Safety around heavy equipment
- Safety around the silage pile
- Safety in the machine room
- Understanding how cattle see
- Waste lagoon safety
- Working with self-locking stanchions

Crucial in the development of the DVDs was that they covered specific risk areas on the dairy and highlighted areas of need and care, while at the same time still leaving room for producers to utilize their own dairy specific procedures and protocols. It was also imperative that the approach be both from a human and an animal well-being perspective, since safety on the dairy is served when and where the human caretaker understandingly and humanely interacts with the animal to minimize and prevent mistakes in animal caretaking. Illustration and documentation of this aspect of animal production is becoming increasingly important to consumers and retailers at



large. Training programs can help instill an image of a quality dairy product, produced in a safe environment from both a human as well as an animal perspective.

A COMPREHENSIVE TOTAL TRAINING AND DAIRY HR RESOURCE

Both DVDs have been extremely well received by the industry and we continue to receive many requests for copies from dairy operations all over the world. However, considering the need for a more comprehensive approach - including the visual training process as highlighted in the DVDs - our next step has been to develop a comprehensive, on-line, interactive subscriber based Human Resource (**HR**) software for dairy operations; which will allow owners, managers, and employees to document and evaluate their training efforts, the accomplished level of comprehension, individual performance evaluation, and standard HR tasks such as scheduling and generating data for export to payroll software.

The program will be based on industry-wide accepted protocols and standard operating procedures, but will also allow flexibility for dairy specific adjustments to these protocols. This tool will provide the

owner and area managers with a dash-board overview of the training and certification level status of the employees under their supervision, the comprehension level of the materials under review, and indicates where follow-up training may be needed in particular areas of concern.

Training will be designed at an entry-, mid-, and advanced level to allow for employees to advance in their particular areas of expertise and to qualify for promotion in rank or in pay scale, as demonstrated by their training level and actual job performance. This tool will not only provide the documentation of training,

as required by regulatory agencies, but simultaneously allow for good employees to demonstrate their skills, abilities, and willingness to advance in their specific jobs or other interest areas on the dairy. In addition managers will be able to evaluate and recognize those skills and ambitions. The Dairy HR software described is currently about 20 % developed and is expected to be released with all of its basic modules in 2015.

For additional information or a copy of the DVD please contact Robert Hagevoort at dairydoc@nmsu.edu or 806-786-3421.