

Protecting Consumer Trust and Confidence in the Dairy Industry: National Dairy Animal Well-Being Coalition Launches Principles and Guidelines¹

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On October 2, 2008 at World Dairy Expo, a broad-based Coalition from across the country, representing every facet of the dairy industry, launched the final version of the National Dairy Animal Well-Being Initiative's (NDAWI) Principles and Guidelines. The Coalition, comprised of producers, processors, cooperatives, allied industry, academics, associations and food companies, have been involved in the work of the National Dairy Animal Well-Being Initiative since late 2005.

The Initiative's goal is to build and maintain consumer trust and confidence in the dairy industry by demonstrating dairy producers' commitment to animal well-being. Dairy producers have an ethical obligation to care for their animals. The Principles and Guidelines are a basic, uniform umbrella of well-being principles and guidelines that any on-farm dairy animal well-being program should include to meet those obligations.

A draft version of the Principles and Guidelines was first released at the 2007 World Dairy Expo. Since then, it has been under review by various stakeholders across the industry, including a committee from right here in Ohio, which was convened by the Ohio Dairy Producers Association. Comments were compiled and evaluated by the NDAWI Coalition and incorporated into the final version released at the 2008 World Dairy Expo.

Although the Principles and Guidelines have now been launched, the process is far from over. Producers are encouraged to participate in on-farm animal well-being programs that are consistent with the Principles and Guidelines, which cover: Nutrition; Animal health; Management; Housing and facilities; and, Handling, movement and transportation. Participation demonstrates the industry's commitment to animal well-being and helps ensure consistency throughout the country.

For a copy of the Principles and Guidelines and to find out more about the National Dairy Animal Well-Being Initiative, you can visit their web-site at: <http://www.dairywellbeing.org/>.

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