

October 3, 2016

To: Provincial Milk Marketing Boards/Authorities  
Provincial Departments responsible for animal welfare

**Re: Response in the event of an animal abuse/cruelty incident including third-party veterinary animal welfare audit**

The Dairy Processors Association of Canada / Association des Transformateurs Laitiers du Canada (DPAC/ATLC) is Canada's national industry association representing the public policy and regulatory interests of the Canadian dairy processing industry.

In light of recent activity, the purpose of this letter is two-fold:

- To provide details in regard to the expectations of DPAC/ATLC and its members in the event of an incident where there is credible evidence of animal abuse/cruelty on a dairy farm
- To provide details in regard to DPAC/ATLC member response in the event of an alleged animal abuse/cruelty situation on a dairy farm

Background:

Milk is the primary ingredient used by DPAC/ATLC members.

The conditions under which milk is produced are of the utmost importance to DPAC/ATLC members. This includes the care and well-being of dairy cattle as well as the safety and quality of the raw milk received for use as an ingredient. It is the responsibility of farmers who are producing/shipping milk to ensure that it has been produced under conditions that meet these expectations.

Animal welfare, as is the case for food safety, is an expectation of DPAC/ATLC members and is not viewed as competitive.

DPAC/ATLC and its members view any mistreatment of animals as unacceptable.

Expectations:

It is the expectation of DPAC/ATLC and its members that provincial authorities will suspend a producer's license and hence milk pickup in the case of an animal cruelty incident. It is also expected that provincial authorities will notify processors immediately in such a circumstance and that processors will be provided with all relevant information.

It is the expectation of DPAC/ATLC and its members that milk from a farm implicated in an alleged animal abuse/cruelty incident will not be shipped to dairy processors until such time as assurance is provided by a third-party veterinary animal welfare auditor that there is compliance with the *Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Dairy Cattle* (the Code) and the farm is cleared by the provincial authorities to ship milk.

Response:

DPAC/ATLC members will not accept milk from an implicated farm until such time as a third-party veterinary animal welfare audit has validated compliance with the Code and the farm is cleared by the provincial authorities to ship milk.

National Veterinary Animal Welfare Audit Roster:

DPAC/ATLC and its members view a third-party veterinary animal welfare audit as a critical and necessary step in restoring customer, consumer and industry confidence during the reintegration process of a farm that has undergone license/milk pickup suspension as a result of loss of market stemming from an animal abuse/cruelty incident.

Experience with incidents of animal abuse/cruelty has shown that having a third-party veterinary animal welfare audit report is a key factor in re-gaining the confidence, trust and support of the public at large, and consumers and customers specifically. Without the

assurance of a third-party veterinary animal welfare audit consumers and customers will refuse to buy dairy products made with any milk from an implicated farm (i.e. there will be an overall loss of sales for all stakeholders).

To this end, a plan for a National Veterinary Animal Welfare Audit Roster (i.e. pool of trained third-party veterinarians) has been presented to DFC and various provincial authorities. It is recognized that the third-party veterinary audit model may need to be adapted in provinces where animal protection enforcement is under provincial veterinary authority. Potential candidates for the Roster could include veterinarians who work as animal protection officers under the authority of their provincial government. Once trained as veterinary animal welfare auditors animal protection officers may be able to perform a 'dual role' in the case of an animal abuse/cruelty event (i.e. in those instances where they are third-party to the implicated farm).

Such a roster would ensure timely access to a third-party veterinarian (i.e. a veterinarian with no association to the implicated farm) who is trained in conducting animal welfare audits thereby facilitating the return to shipment/receipt of milk from an implicated farm as quickly as possible.

As indicated above, successful completion of a third-party veterinary animal welfare audit is a critical requirement for DPAC/ATLC members to resume receiving milk from a farm that has undergone a suspension of license/milk pickup as a result of an animal abuse/cruelty incident. This is an essential step in restoring processor, processors' customers and consumer confidence that the implicated farm has appropriately addressed any ongoing animal welfare issues or concerns.

We trust this letter provides added clarity in regard to the expectations and response of DPAC/ATLC members in the event of an incident where there is credible evidence of animal abuse/cruelty on a dairy farm.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions in regard to these matters.

Sincerely,



*Jacques Lefebvre*  
President and CEO  
Président-directeur-général  
Dairy Processors Association of Canada  
Association des Transformateurs Laitiers du Canada

cc:  
DPAC-ATLC Board  
DPAC-ATLC Animal Welfare Committee  
Dairy Farmers of Canada: Caroline Emond; Yves Leduc; Nicole Sillett  
Provincial Processor Associations: Dan Wong; Christina Lewis; Charles Langlois