

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

Friday, June 22, 2018

RE: Dairy processor expectations with regard to alleged animal abuse/cruelty incidents

Further to the letter dated October 3, 2016, the Dairy Processors Association of Canada (DPAC) would like to take this opportunity to remind milk marketing boards of the expectations of dairy processors in the event of alleged animal abuse/cruelty incidents.

The purpose of this letter is to provide:

- Background on DPAC's position on animal care;
- Details with regard to the expectations of DPAC and its members in the event of an incident where there is credible evidence of animal abuse/cruelty on a dairy farm;
- Details in regard to DPAC members' response in the event of an alleged animal abuse/cruelty situation on a dairy farm.

Background

The conditions under which milk is produced are of the utmost importance to DPAC 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 the expectations outlined in this letter. Animal welfare, as is the case for food safety, is an expectation of DPAC members.

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

Expectations of DPAC

It is the expectation of DPAC and its members that provincial authorities will immediately:

- suspend a producer's license and milk pickup in the case of an animal cruelty incident;
- notify DPAC and the provincial dairy processors association(s) whose members may have received milk for the implicated farm and provide all relevant information.

Further, it is the expectation of DPAC 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 of DPAC Members

DPAC 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.

Third-party Veterinary Animal Welfare Audit

The successful completion of a third-party veterinary animal welfare audit is a critical requirement for DPAC 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.

DPAC 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 DPAC 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 facilitate this process, DPAC and Dairy Farmers of Canada (DFC) initiated a joint project in 2017 to develop a National Third-Party Animal Welfare Audit Roster Training Pilot (Roster Training Pilot). Through this, three veterinarians from across Canada were trained to provide animal welfare audit services in the event of an alleged animal abuse/cruelty incident.

Information related to this roster was shared with your organization on May 31, 2018. Should you need this information once again, we ask that you communicate with Nicole Sillet, Assistant Director, National On-Farm Programs at Nicole.Sillett@dfc-plc.ca or 604-224-8001.

We trust this letter provides added clarity in regard to the expectations and response of DPAC and its 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,



Mathieu Frigon
President and Chief Executive Officer

Dairy Processors Association of Canada

Cc. Jacques Lefebvre, CEO, Dairy Farmers of Canada