

## Livestock Care Standards Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

A meeting of the Livestock Care Standards Advisory Council (Council) was held on November 18, 2015 in the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets' second floor conference room located at 116 State Street, Montpelier VT.

The following members were present: Dr. Kristin Haas (KH); Dr. Ruth Blauwiekel (RB); Diane Bothfeld (DB); Les Pike (LP); Royal Larocqe (RL); Joe Emenheiser (JE); Jane Clifford (JC); Brian Kemp (BK); Marcey Wisnowski (MW); JoAnn Nichols (JN); Melody Squier (MS); Dr. Kent Henderson (KEH)

The following public observers (affiliations) were present: Barry Londeree (Humane Society of the United States); Gina Brown (Spring Hill Horse Rescue); Hooved Animal Sanctuary

A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order by DB at 9:03 AM.

One new Council member was introduced. JoAnn Nichols was appointed by the Speaker of the House to serve a three year term as an individual who is a representative of a Vermont humane society.

The minutes from the September 2015 meeting were approved unanimously after a motion made by LP and seconded by RB.

The Council discussed funding options for the printing of the calf/cattle transport best management practice outreach materials, as well as methods of dissemination once printed. KMH shared estimates from the State print shop and L. Brown & Sons Printing, Inc., and it was determined that the private option would be utilized for the project since it is more economical. JE agreed to pursue a possible funding option within UVM Extension. JE and JC agreed to follow up with the executive director of the Vermont Beef Industry Council to determine if that organization would be willing to support the printing of the materials. Both Council members hope to report their findings by December 1, 2015, and a final decision will be made no later than December 15<sup>th</sup>. The following options were suggested for dissemination pathways: producer meetings; VVMA winter meeting; Farmers' Coalition; trailer dealerships (Lucky's and Upper Ten); slaughter facilities; DMV vehicle checkpoints; dairy co-ops; grain dealers; mailings to licensed livestock dealers and haulers. KMH will reach out to the VVMA executive director to request time on the agenda of the winter VVMA meeting in order to introduce the educational materials to veterinary attendees and to request that they distribute the information to their clientele.

The Council discussed pertinent legislative bills/topics that may be considered during the 2016 session, including the following: S.22, H.347, sunseting of the on-farm slaughter exemption expansion, and the increase of the number of poultry allowed to be slaughtered without inspection.

KEH shared information regarding bovine tail docking and swine gestation crates with the Council. Recently published materials that support the position statements that the Council has on both topics are attached to these minutes. These published materials demonstrate the fact that industry is making market-driven changes to the ways in which production livestock animals are managed, even in the absence of legislative mandates within Vermont.

KMH and MS informed the Council that they would be meeting with members of the Equine Welfare Coalition (EWC) to discuss legislative bill language proposed by the EWC intended to amend the statutory language pertaining to equine shelter requirements. KMH stated that she would follow up with Council member Tracy Simon to request that she forward the results of her research on this topic to the Council prior to the next meeting (see minutes from September 2015 meeting).

A public comment period was held. Gina Brown confirmed that the EWC would be working to introduce language that would amend the equine shelter statutes; members of the Hooved Animal Sanctuary stated the same; Barry Londeree stated that appropriate laws are important to drive change related to animal well-being even when industry is being proactive.

The Council's 2016 meeting dates were established and are the following:

February 17, 2016

April 13, 2016

September 21, 2016

November 9, 2016

JE confirmed following the meeting that the 2016 meetings can all be held at the [UVM Extension classroom](#) at 327 U.S. Route 302 in Barre. All meetings will be held from 9AM to noon.

Following a request made by RB, KMH stated that she would inquire as to whether a Council member participating in a meeting via conference call contributes to having a quorum.

Under new business, JE informed the Council that UVM Extension would like to organize training event(s) pertaining to on-farm biosecurity and KMH updated the Council on the State's preparedness efforts for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) and some aspects of the HPAI response plan that have potential animal welfare implications.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:20AM

Respectfully submitted,



Kristin M. Haas, DVM

From Feedstuffs Nov. 2, 2015

### Earlier Dairy Tail Docking Phase-out Set

The board of the National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) recently set Jan. 1, 2017, as the date for dairy farmers participating in the industry's Farmers Assuring Responsible Management (FARM) Animal Care Program to phase out the routine practice of tail docking.

At the federation's annual meeting last week, the board approved a resolution to move up the previously established 2022 deadline by five years for discontinuing tail docking. The resolution will be incorporated into the dozens of animal care measures of the FARM program to ensure the consistent, optimal care of dairy cows in the U.S.

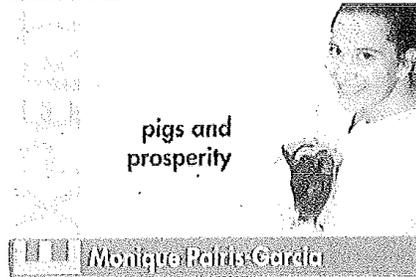
"On this issue, the science, the advice of our technical experts and requests from our dairy customers and consumers are all aligned." NMPF president and chief executive officer Jim Mulhern said. "Today's action demonstrates that dairy producer-leaders want to be proactive yet pragmatic in addressing animal care concerns."

NMPF started the FARM Animal Care Program in 2009 to highlight how much the dairy industry is doing to improve animal care. Dairy farmers supplying milk to dairy co-ops and processors representing more than 90% of the nation's milk supply now participate. The program demonstrates producers' commitment to providing quality care to their cows.

# Group sow housing; coming to America

Nov 2, 2015 last update: Nov 3, 2015 1684 3

For the US swine industry, the most controversial animal welfare issue debated over to date is the discussion on housing facilities of pregnant sows; more specifically, the use of gestation stalls/crates.



*From a scientific standpoint, there are pros and cons to every housing system. Based on the research, there is no one ideal system to house a pregnant sow, and in fact, management of the sows rather than the facility itself plays a critical role in the productivity, health and success of a herd.*

## **Science is not the only factor**

However, like most animal welfare issues, science is neither the only voice in the discussion nor the only factor that plays a role in the decisions we make regarding how we manage swine. In the US, changes to sow housing systems have been driven both by legislation and retailer expectations.

Since 2009, 8 states have implemented legislation limiting certain housing systems. The first of which was passed in 2003 in Florida which 'prevent(ed) a person from confining a pig during pregnancy... in such a way that she is prevent(ed) from turning around freely'. Once Amendment 10 in Florida passed, several ballot initiatives followed, including Michigan and Ohio which will phase out gestation stalls by 2019 and 2025, respectively. In addition to state level legislation, over 35 retail companies have issued announcements specific on gestation stall use and their willingness to accept pork from suppliers utilising stalls.

## **First annual Tri-State Sow Housing Conference**

Recognising that change is inevitable, extension specialists and professors from Michigan State University, the Ohio State University and Purdue University will host the first annual Tri-State Sow Housing Conference. The conference will be held on February 9th, 2016 and consist of a day of educational material to prepare Indiana, Michigan and Ohio producers during this transition.