

Livestock Care Standards Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

A meeting of the Livestock Care Standards Advisory Council was held on March 20, 2013 in the classroom of the University of Vermont Extension office at 617 Comstock Road in Berlin, VT. The following members were present:

Dr. Kristin M. Haas (KMH), Jane Clifford (JC), Dr. Kent E. Henderson (KEH), Melody Squier (MS), Dr. Ruth Blauwiel (RB), Diane Bothfeld (DB), Tracy Simon (TS), Paul Saenger (PS), Carl Cushing (CC), Les Pike (LP), and Marcy Wisnowski (MW).

A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order by DB at 9:09 AM.

The following public observers (affiliations) were present:

Joanne Bourbeau (Humane Society of the United States), Dottie Nelson (consumer and animal advocate), Carrie Abels (Humaneitarian website and *Local Banquet*); Laura Yanne (consumer).

The January 2013 meeting minutes were unanimously approved as written, following a motion made by LP and seconded by RB. JC and MS did not participate as they arrived at the meeting after the vote took place.

Updates were provided by DB and KMH, and a short discussion was held, on the following bills (status) currently in front of the legislature:

- S.70 – raw milk bill – likely going to pass out of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Senate
- S.109 – bovine/equine tail docking – was not voted out of committee before crossover
- H.438 – swine gestation crates – was not voted out of committee before crossover
- S.162 – applying for agricultural job under false pretenses – was not voted out of committee before crossover
- H.101 – ban on feral swine – was not voted out of committee before crossover

The Council discussed at length the issue of well being of livestock during transport in order to begin to proactively develop and/or disseminate beneficial outreach and education materials that will help to ensure that livestock animals are shipped humanely. The discussion focused largely on factors that specifically impact transport of calves to slaughter. The following points were emphasized:

- When trying to ensure the humane treatment of food producing animals, the transport of these animals is likely the most difficult phase along the farm to plate continuum because:

- Individuals trucking livestock to slaughter sometimes do not own the animals they are trucking. As a result, there may be less of an incentive to treat them with care.
- Individuals transporting livestock generally are paid based on mileage, not by the quality of the animals being delivered.
- Hours of service performed by truckers are often excessive, which results in driver fatigue, which results in more hard stops and starts, which may negatively impact the welfare of the animals being trucked.
- Drivers are not overseen directly/observed by supervisors or employers when they are trucking livestock so it is more challenging to correct unwanted behaviors.

The Council also recognized the fact that some categories of livestock, such as wet calves, Jersey calves, and goat kids are inherently difficult to maintain humanely during transport because they are smaller and/or weaker.

The Council discussed the fact that it may be beneficial to incentivize hauling companies in order to ensure that the desired behavior is achieved. Cargill and JBS Trucking have developed programs to help ensure appropriate care of livestock during transport.

Following this discussion, the Council agreed that it would focus its outreach specifically on livestock transport, including practices at the points of origin and points of destination. Further discussion clarified that appropriate steps in developing materials would be to identify the audience, decide on the format of the message, and determine the manner(s) in which the information is going to be disseminated.

The following mechanisms of dissemination of materials were discussed:

- Include cost/benefit information on shipping wet calves vs. 3-5 day old calves in producers' milk checks
- Include educational materials in information sent to producers from markets (bills and checks)
- Provide DMV officials with materials that they can hand out when stopping livestock transport vehicles at weigh stations
- Post written and possibly video materials in areas frequented by haulers – truck stops, offloading points at slaughter facilities, etc.

The following tasks were assigned to Council members for completion prior to the next meeting:

- Review Quality Beef Assurance materials pertinent to transport – JC
- Review Livestock Marketing Association guidance materials – KMH
- Review and email KMH the VVMA's Best Management Practices document for bob calf management – RB

- Review/compile information that has previously been submitted to Chair DB by Council members – KMH

The Council intends to further discuss this information at its next meeting and begin to codify a viable outreach plan.

A public comment period was held; Dottie Nelson addressed the Council on the importance of ensuring proper care of livestock regardless of their economic value, and Laura Yanne clarified the content of S.109 and stated that it is time to legislate an end to the practice of tail docking within the industry.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 AM.