



FARM Workforce Development

2nd Party Evaluation Tool Version 1.0

The FARM Workforce Development (WFD) 2nd party Evaluation Tool, Version 1.0, encourages best practices, with a focus on developing sustainable management processes and procedures to promote positive human resources (HR) and safety outcomes on dairies. HR and safety management will look different depending on the unique circumstances of the individual dairy. By using information from and referencing the FARM WFD HR and Safety Manuals, HR Templates, and other FARM resources, the evaluation tool operationalizes the FARM WFD materials – supporting dairy producers and managers in their journeys of continuous improvement.

Where applicable, the Evaluation Tool encourages policies and processes to be recorded in writing, which should be shared with employees. For example, the contents of an Employee Handbook should be shared with employees during a new employee orientation.

Moreover, the Evaluation Tool provides a framework for good communication and creating a positive workplace culture through such means as holding staff meetings, checking in with new employees, and developing grievance procedures.

Farmer, Expert, and Stakeholder Input

The FARM WFD 2nd Party Evaluation Tool Version 1.0 was created with input and guidance from the [FARM WFD Task Force](#), which includes representation from dairy farmers, academics, cooperative staff, subject matter experts, and others. The Evaluation Tool was initially drafted from the HR and Safety Self-Assessments contained in the HR and Safety Manuals.

FARM WFD also received direct feedback from producers through a pilot program conducted in the winter of 2019 / 2020. FARM Participants volunteered to participate in a pilot of the 2nd party evaluation. They implemented the evaluation tool with a total of 45 dairy farms. The FARM Participants and evaluators in the pilot also provided direct feedback on the tool and implementation. Finally, a 45-day public consultation period invited external stakeholders from across the entire dairy value chain to review the draft Evaluation Tool and provide feedback. A summary of findings from the public comment period can be [found online](#).





Leveraging an Experienced Network of Evaluators

FARM’s network of 2nd party evaluators implement the evaluation tool on behalf of FARM Participants. Implementation means that an evaluator goes out to the farm and reviews each HR and safety best practice from the Evaluation Tool with the dairy owner or manager. The evaluator explains the value of each best practice and points to resources / templates / information to assist in next steps. Evaluators approach each question depending on its type: Interview (i.e. ask the farm management and employees about a certain policy or practice); Observe (i.e. visually inspect an area); or Review Documents (i.e. read-through a given document). Often, evaluation questions will entail a combination of these approaches.

More than an Audit

FARM WFD is a comprehensive program to support farmers in building excellent and safe work environments. The 2nd party Evaluation Tool is a core part of the program, but FARM WFD also has free templates; comprehensive, dual-language HR and Safety Manuals; and, state and federal legal fact sheets. In fact, the 2nd party Evaluation Tool was designed so that each question relates back [to resources and / or templates](#) to assist producers in striving towards continuous improvement.

Valuing Diversity

FARM WFD shares information about best practices but recognizes that *how* such practices get implemented and *which ones* are used depends on the needs of the individual dairy operation. FARM WFD is not a one-size-fits all, prescriptive program. Rather, it encourages high-quality safety and HR management and planning. FARM WFD cares about good communication and understanding between employees and employers; not about prescribing how that is accomplished.

Avoiding Duplication

Legal compliance is an important baseline for business operations. FARM WFD provides information about relevant laws and regulations through federal and state fact sheets that are updated annually. Additionally, the Safety and HR Manuals go in-depth on certain compliance topics. However, as demonstrated through the 2nd party Evaluation Tool and suite of resources, the focus is on promoting best practices that will help U.S. dairy farms be “employers of choice” in rural America. Verifying legal compliance is the duty of the proper legal and regulatory agencies.

Respect for Privacy

Payroll records, personnel files, medical care records – these are all files that contain personal information about employees and the dairy business. FARM WFD does not require or recommend that evaluators attempt to view personal and private information.



Wide Breadth

The FARM WFD Evaluation Tool is not a set of requirements. Rather, it shares information and resources about best practices in HR and safety. It helps track which practices are being implemented on the farm today and where a farm should focus in the future. The topics below are covered in the 2nd party Evaluation Tool, Version 1.0.

Laws and Regulations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has FARM Legal Fact Sheets on-hand • Appropriate staff have reviewed it 	
Human Resources	Safety
<p>Recruitment and Hiring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • References / background checks • Consistent selection process • Conducting and documenting a new employee orientation, with suggested topics of Employee Handbook, wages, grievance procedure, etc. • Checking in with new employees • Access to onboarding materials <p>Employee Communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff meetings • Grievance procedure • Employee training • Employee Handbook or Code of Conduct <p>Managing Employee Performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disciplinary process <p>Compensation and Benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timekeeping system with employee and manager verification <p>Working Conditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing work schedules in advance • Tracking rest and meal breaks <p>Discrimination and Harassment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written policy, including how to report complaints and non-retaliation <p>Recordkeeping</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personnel files • Accessibility of payroll records <p>Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Routine inspections • Signed, written housing agreement 	<p>Regulatory Context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety poster <p>Working Conditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essential facilities: restroom facilities with locks; clean drinking water; rest areas • First-aid kits <p>Safety Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written safety plan / program Evaluation contains list of recommended topics to cover. • Procedure for reporting safety concerns • Routine safety inspections • Process for managing hazards or risks • Tracking safety incidents and near misses <p>Safety Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial safety training. Evaluation contains recommended list of topics to cover. • Routine refresher training + re-training following an incident • Documenting training <p>Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire extinguishers, smoke alarms, carbon monoxide detectors • Emergency contacts and phone numbers

Learn more online at <https://nationaldairyfarm.com/dairy-farm-standards/farm-workforce-development/> or contact the FARM Program directly at dairyfarm@nmpf.org