



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Resources, events, and the latest happenings with the FARM Program.

April 2024

LATEST NEWS

2024 Evaluator Conference registration open

The 2024 FARM Evaluator Conference is July 22-24 at the Embassy Suites by Hilton Lexington Green in Lexington, KY.

Registration is now open for the conference. [Use this link for general admission registration](#). Farmer Advisory Council (FAC) members and Animal Care Trainers will receive a separate email with links for their separate meetings.



Travel and hotel accommodations are not included in the registration cost. Rooms are available at a rate of \$169/night using the Group Code CESNMP or [this direct link](#).

The [FARM Evaluator Conference webpage](#) will be updated frequently with additional speaker information and details about the optional add-on social activities.

Implementation Cost Survey available through May 31

While the National Dairy FARM Program is administered at the national level through a USDA and DMI contract, it is known that program participants incur direct cost through program facilitation and evaluator management. To date, the amount of additional financial contribution by dairy cooperatives and processors has not been captured.

The FARM Program Senior Director of Animal Care Beverly Hampton Phifer is conducting a survey on the topic as part of her master's degree program. The survey was emailed to primary managers, who are the target audience. Your willingness to participate is greatly appreciated and the data collected will help to account for the costs associated with FARM Program participation.

This survey will take approximately 11 minutes of your time to complete and will be available until May 31, 2024.

[Take the Survey](#)

FARM hosts successful breakout at Dairy Sustainability Alliance spring meeting

The FARM Program hosted a breakout session at the Dairy Sustainability Alliance spring meeting on April 18th to showcase the progress and plans for FARM Environmental Stewardship's Version 3 release this summer 2024. Sage Saffran and DMI's Kaitlyn Briggs shared an overview of the program today and plans to integrate the Ruminant Farm Systems (RuFaS) model – a cutting-edge initiative of researchers across the country focused on whole-farm sustainability modeling. The session offered a sneak peek into the insights farmers can expect from their results, how the new platform will enable scenario analyses of potential practice and technology changes, and the enhancements FARM expected to make to the platform over the coming years.

Minnesota dairy farmer, Suzanne Vold, and Cornell researcher, Joe Waddell, joined the session to share their perspective on the FARM ES upgrade.

As we build toward the launch of FARM ES V3, we are immensely grateful to Dairy Sustainability Alliance members Unilever and Domino's for their generous support of the new tool. Both partners are providing funding to support the development of new education and training materials for FARM ES evaluators. The new materials will guide FARM evaluators on using the new tool and leveraging the output for meaningful conversations with farmers. These invaluable educational materials and trainings would not have been possible without the support of Unilever and Domino's.

FARM highlights Conservation Practice Questionnaire for Earth Day

The FARM Program released findings from its Conservation Practice Questionnaire highlighting the leading stewardship of dairy farmers in observance of Earth Day.

The questionnaire, a voluntary addition to the FARM Environmental Stewardship (ES) Program, highlights some of U.S. dairy farmers' conservation efforts, including practices and technologies that show effective water, energy and other resource stewardship.

FARM ES launched the questionnaire in August 2022 after significant stakeholder feedback and on-farm piloting. More than 450 of them have been completed on dairy farms across 20 states since its launch, with respondents ranging in milking herd size from 17 cows to more than 15,000. The completed questionnaires offer a lens into the natural resource stewardship of the dairy farmers who participate.

[Read More](#)

Colorado State University seeks producer feedback in research opportunity

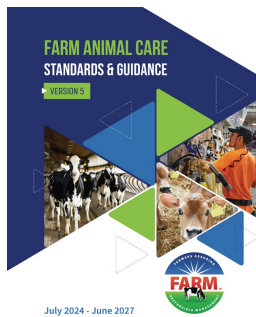
Colorado State University is conducting a research study on the well-being of both farmworkers and animals in the dairy industry. Researchers are asking dairy producers and employees to complete an anonymous survey about attitude and experience with dairy cattle, workplace stress and some demographic information.

The survey should not take longer than 10 minutes to complete and can be taken on a computer or mobile, in English or Spanish. The questionnaire is due by June 1. Use this link to share with interested producers and/or employees:

https://colostate.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6J4xs3djlLrcW9g

NEW & UPDATED RESOURCES

Animal Care V5 Evaluator Guidance Book now available



A brand new evaluator guidance book is now available for download in the Database Library. Additionally, FARM Animal Care Trainers and Participant Primary Managers can purchase from the password-protected Evaluator Resources section of the [FARM Store](#). Questions about the store password can be directed to dairyfarm@nmpf.org.

This document provides a list of every program standard, and the corresponding guidance evaluators are expected to follow, for Version 5. Each section of the evaluation is presented with the core standard/evaluation question, any relevant informational questions, and evaluator guidance for scoring the question on farm.

Sample article text for AC Version 5

As a reminder per FARM Animal Care participation form, it is the responsibility of participants to communicate programmatic updates to farmers. The following article can be shared in newsletters, email communications, or other formats to help spread the word and answer questions about Animal Care Version 5:

Version 5 of the National Dairy FARM Animal Care Program will go into effect July 1. This is following a 2.5-year review process involving more than 85 individual farmers, along with cooperative and processor staff, veterinarians and animal scientists, and including a publicly available open comment period.

Refinements within this version include:

- **Locomotion**
 - Establish a benchmark of no more than 15% moderate lameness
- **Disbudding**
 - Update pain management requirement to be met within 9 months

(previously 3 years)

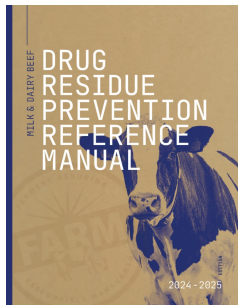
- Acceptable methods: Caustic Paste & Cautery

- **Calves**
 - Clarify the definition of appropriate timeliness, quantity and quality of colostrum
- **Continuing Education**
 - Elevate family employee continuing education standard to be met within 9-month timeline (previously 3 years)
- **Euthanasia**
 - Add the identification of a trained secondary individual for euthanasia implementation and confirmation of death in existing euthanasia protocol
- **Program Implementation**
 - Establish process for FARM & Participant to support farms that exceed animal observation benchmarks significantly

This version of FARM Animal Care will be in effect from July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2027.

Definitions of corrective actions and more information on Version 5 can be found at <https://nationaldairyfarm.com/dairy-farm-standards/animal-care/animal-care-version-5-development/>.

COMING SOON: 2024-2025 Milk & Dairy Beef Drug Residue Prevention Manual



The 2024-2025 revised Milk & Dairy Beef Drug Residue Prevention Manual will be available for download and for purchase in the FARM Store later this month. A pocket guide version is in development and will also be available this spring.

New USDA Animal Topics page

The USDA has created a new Animal Topics page with the goal of sharing the diverse array of USDA animal agriculture resources and support together in one place.

The new page includes a lot more information than the previous Animals Topic page, including Animal Agriculture Resources by Sector and Species; and sections on: Animal Breeding and Genomics; Animal Health, Wellbeing, and Welfare; Animal Nutrition and Feeding; Animal Reproduction; Climate Change, Sustainability, and Animal Agriculture; Food Safety of Animal Products; Markets, Economics, and Trade (Domestic and International; Wildlife; as well as additional Animal Research Resources, which includes a list all of the USDA ARS animal agriculture research units, and additional farm animal resources, risk management, technical and financial support.

DATABASE UPDATES

Monthly database fixes resume TONIGHT

The National Dairy FARM Program Database will be updated April 23 at 8 p.m. ET / 5 p.m. PT. The temporary shutdown should last about 30 minutes and will include general improvements and bug fixes.

General Improvements

- **Quality Assurance and User Experience Enhancements:** The fixes in this release are part of our ongoing commitment to improve user experience and system reliability. We continue to refine our processes and tools based on your feedback.

Bug Fixes

- **Evaluator Certification Expiration Correction:** We resolved an issue where old certification dates were incorrectly prioritized on the Training Certification List and the "Certifications Expiring Soon" card on the overview page. The system now recognizes and displays only the most recent evaluator certifications, which accurately reflects the current status of user certifications and avoids confusion about expiration dates.
- **Access Permissions for 2nd-Party Evaluators:** A bug restricting 2nd-party evaluators from viewing 3rd-party verifications of facilities has been corrected.

Download the full release notes

FARM continues to host Database Demo Sessions

The FARM Program launched the new FARM Database last month. FARM will continue to offer Zoom demo sessions to explain the new features that were released. These sessions are designed to provide an overview of the new database including participant management, basic functionalities across program areas, and updates to the resource library. **The final general session offered is April 25.** Register here: [FARM Program Database Demo Registration](#)

Detailed Orientation for Animal Care Evaluators

FARM will also host orientation webinars specific to Animal Care evaluators, which will offer a deep dive into features and functionalities essential for FARM Animal Care evaluations. To attend one of the remaining Animal Care orientations, register here: [FARM Program Database Orientation Registration - Animal Care Evaluators](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

FARM Workforce Development to host 4 virtual trainings

FARM Workforce Development (WFD) will host four virtual evaluator trainings this year. The virtual trainings will be conducted on Zoom and will have a similar structure to previous years, including a review of the evaluation form and the program, as well as subject matter experts sharing insights on HR and safety best management practices. These trainings are open for both recertifying and initial evaluators, and will be offered the following dates in 2024:

- May 29-30
- June 26-27
- September 11-12
- October 30-31

If you are interested in registering, please email dairyfarm@nmpf.org.

Save the Date: Q2 Evaluator Happy Hour is June 25

The virtual Evaluator Happy Hour for the second quarter will be at 3 p.m. EDT Tuesday, June 25. One of the topics will be observation scoring for animals in tie-stalls. Additional topics will be announced closer to the meeting. You can pre-register [here](#).

If you missed the Q1 Evaluator Happy Hour, you can watch the recording in the [Happy Hour archive](#) in the FARM Database.



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