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# DAIRY NEWSLETTER

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## **Canadian Quality Milk (CQM) and proAction Program Updates**

The Canadian Quality Milk program has completed its roll-out in Ontario and now all dairy farms will fall into the routine of the annual self-declaration and re-validation schedule. If you require any assistance to review on going records or would appreciate a farm visit to ensure the farm continues to meet all of the program requirements, please do not hesitate to contact the clinic.

CQM is one of 6 modules of Dairy Farmers of Canada's proAction program. Through proAction, Canadian dairy farmers will continue to demonstrate responsible stewardship of their animals and the environment, sustainably producing high quality, safe and nutritious food for consumers.

The next two modules are set to roll out beginning September 2017. These modules are titled "Animal Care" and "Traceability". These modules will be assessed on your current CQM validation cycle.

Much will be discussed about the upcoming modules and their requirements throughout the next year. Most importantly all farms will be required to have written Standard Operating Procedures for dealing with a variety of animal health events and procedures, and an Animal Care Assessment completed by Holstein Canada at least every 2 years (must be completed within the 12 months prior to your on farm validation). Farms must show they are achieving industry-set targets for body condition score, lameness and hock, neck and knee injuries or improving year after year if they fail to reach those target thresholds.

As your veterinarians, we will be trained to act as advisors and to offer our guidance and knowledge to ensure that your farm is able to meet all requirements. Similar to CQM, Dairy Farmers of Ontario will cover the cost of an in-class training session that we at the clinic will organize and facilitate so stay tuned for more information.

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## **Calf Rearing Focus Farm Group**

Are you looking for new ideas to improve your current calf management program?

Do you learn well through discussions and demonstrations with and by other area producers?

We plan to run a Focus Farm group, discussing issues relating to Calf Rearing Management. A "Focus Farm" is an alternative learning strategy whereby small groups of participants tour facilities, discuss topics and share ideas. Topics of discussion will be directed by the group participants and ideas will be supported through the use of personal experiences and expert knowledge.

**\$25 per farm**

**Minimum of 3 sessions. Date, time and location TBD (January-April). Lunch included**

**Call the clinic today if you are interested in being a part of this exciting learning opportunity!**



December 2015

## To Ship...or...Not to Ship

In Ontario over one million animals are sold through livestock auctions every year. Most of these animals are perfectly healthy and go through the sale barns with no consequence. Veterinarians are present at each sale barn on sale days inspecting animals for signs of injury or illness. These veterinarians receive additional training and guidance from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) and have the authority to determine whether or not that animal can go through the sales ring and enter the human food chain.

Not surprisingly the animals most commonly segregated as “abnormal” are cull cows and more often than not these cows are black and white in colour and come from the dairy industry. Lameness, emaciation, being down, weakness, and dehydration are the conditions most often seen in these cull cows leading to additional veterinary inspection at the sale. Depending on the severity of these conditions or the presence of multiple conditions the veterinarian can elect to euthanize the cow at the sale. In less severe cases the veterinarian can have the cow sent direct to local slaughter, sent home for treatment, or sold with a ring announcement. In some cases cows have been so compromised or unfit for transport that OMAFRA has prosecuted the individuals responsible for sending that animal to the sale barn in court. Dairy Farmers of Ontario (DFO) are contacted and the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (OSPCA) is also called in to do investigations when necessary.

What some producers do not realize is the amount of time their cow may be in the system before she is slaughtered. In an ideal world a trucker would pick up and the animal sold and slaughtered within 24 hours. However, this is usually not the case. Many cull cows end up going through multiple sale barns throughout Ontario and arrive in slaughter houses in the United States. It can take a week or more from when that cull cow leaves your farm until the point she is slaughtered. With this information your decisions on which cows to send to the sale barns may be drastically changed; can she handle “being in the system” for the next week?

As your veterinarians we are committed to helping you make culling decisions with your animals. We are always open to discussing the viability of cows in your herd that you are thinking of shipping. Whether the discussion happens at a herd health visit, while we are seeing another sick cow, or even over the phone, we can help provide guidance in your decision making process.

Even before discussing specific animals with us there are a few simple questions you can ask yourself before making the decision to send a cow:

1. Would you eat her? Would you serve her to your family?
2. Will she last up to a week before being slaughtered?
3. Are you confident that she will not be segregated as “suspect”, “abnormal”, or “compromised”?
4. Would the general public have a positive view of this cow?

If you answered “no” to any or all of these questions, that would be a good indication that this is not a cow that should be put on a truck. At very least this type of cow would be one you should discuss with your veterinarian or consider euthanizing on farm.

For more information: See OMAFRA and CFIA websites for decision trees for transporting animals. Hard copies available – Just ask us!

Farm and Food Care – Caring for Compromised Cattle: <http://www.farmfoodcare.org/pdfs/animal-resources/Caring-Compromised-Cattle-2010-07.pdf>

Dairy Code of Practice <http://www.nfacc.ca/codes-of-practice/dairy-cattle>