
DAIRY NEWSLETTER

PROACTION UPDATE

Now that the Canadian Quality Milk program (CQM) is fully implemented on all Ontario dairy farms, it is time to turn our attention to the next phase of the proAction program. As a reminder, proAction is the umbrella term used to describe a Dairy Farmers of Canada lead initiative that aims to ensure, and demonstrate to consumers, that Canadian milk is high quality and produced under appropriate and professional standards.

Beginning in September 2017, all farms, regardless of their validation month or year, will have to begin to show compliance for all the requirements for the Animal Care and Traceability modules of the program. A Biosecurity module is set to follow, starting September 2019 and finally an Environmental Sustainability module to complete the program will require validation beginning September 2021. In terms of what your future validation visits will look like, any validation visit occurring after September 1, 2017 will include a look at your CQM and proAction requirements and there must be evidence that you have been following all proAction requirements since that date as well.

The requirements of the Animal Care and Traceability modules have been confirmed and all information can be found on the DFO website <https://www.milk.org/Corporate/proAction/proActionMain.aspx>. Please note that the training material will not be provided to you by DFO, unless you request it. If you require assistance accessing any necessary materials, please contact the clinic and we would be happy to assist.

Similar to CQM, our veterinary team has been trained to act as Advisors for the remaining proAction modules. We will once again be offering free in class training sessions that aim to get you familiar with the various components of the program. We plan to offer these training sessions, beginning in late 2016/early 2017.

Animal Care Requirements at a Glance:

The animal care module is based on the recently updated Dairy Code of Practice. There are 20 requirements, 5 of which are mandatory and the other 15 resulting in numerical demerit points when compliance is not met. These requirements involve writing a number of Standard Operating Procedures, having a written plan for dealing with down cows, ensuring cattle of all ages are fed and watered properly and have clean, comfortable environments with adequate social contact and having your herd assessed for body condition score, lameness and injury by a qualified 3rd party. Also, tail docking after September 1, 2017 will be prohibited, unless necessary for documented medical reasons. Holstein Canada will be responsible for performing the animal assessments, but as your veterinary advisors, we are always available to assist you in the writing of your SOPs, or helping you to identify and improve any animal health, care or comfort issues.

For most farms, these requirements will not have a significant impact on the day to day operation of the farm; however some aspects of the program will result in changes that need to be implemented. Speak with your herd veterinarian to discuss any concerns you have to ensure an action plan is created and there is plenty of time to address changes. Also keep in mind, that Growing Forward 2 cost-share funding may be available to assist you with these changes.

To get you started, below is an example of the dehorning protocol our clinic uses for young calves with the electric or butane dehorner. If this is what you do on your farm, save this newsletter with your records and you have now satisfied one of the mandatory requirements for proAction Animal Care!

Standard Operating Procedure for Disbudding/Dehorning Calves

Goal: All animals will be dehorned in a safe and effective manner, at as early of an age as possible and using methods that reduce the animal's pain and discomfort.

This procedure should only be performed on healthy calves and care should be taken to not perform during times of severe heat/weather stress and at times of high fly concentration.

1. Restrain calf safely using an appropriately sized and correctly placed halter and tie snugly and securely to a safe object. A quick release knot should always be used, in case of an emergency.
2. Administer a local corneal nerve block using Lidocaine 2%
Correct location for administration is: Midway between the lateral canthus of the eye and the horn. Feel for the triangular depression
3. 5-10mL Lidocaine 2% is administered on each side – wait a minimum of 5 minutes prior to starting dehorning.
 - a. The sedative Xylazine can also be added to the Lidocaine mix for added handler safety. This mixture is purchased directly from the Kirkton Veterinary Clinic and the product is labelled “Kirkton Veterinary Clinic Dehorning Solution”
4. Ensure the equipment being used to dehorn has had at least 5 minutes to heat up – the dehorner must be hot prior to starting the procedure.
 - a. Gas powered dehorner: Apply the unit over the horn bud and burn until a white ring is achieved. Using horizontal pressure, scoop out the horn bud or remove.
 - b. Electric dehorner: Apply the unit over the horn bud and burn until there is a golden ring is visible all around the horn bud.
5. Administer 1mL/100lbs Metacam under the skin for pain and inflammatory control

Bob Calves at Ontario Sales Barns – Checking for Umbilical Infections

As a monitoring aid, to ensure only healthy animals are transported and sold at sales barns, there is a University of Guelph/OMAFRA study occurring at various sales barns this summer. All calves arriving at a sales barn will be examined, with specific attention paid to their umbilicus. If a calf has abnormal swelling or pain in their naval region, their temperature will be assessed and they will be flagged to be examined by the veterinary inspector. Please check the umbilicus of all calves destined for a sales barn prior to shipping, and if you find abnormalities, please refrain from sending them. Consult your herd veterinarian to develop a prevention and treatment strategy for calves with umbilical infections.

