

April 15, 2015

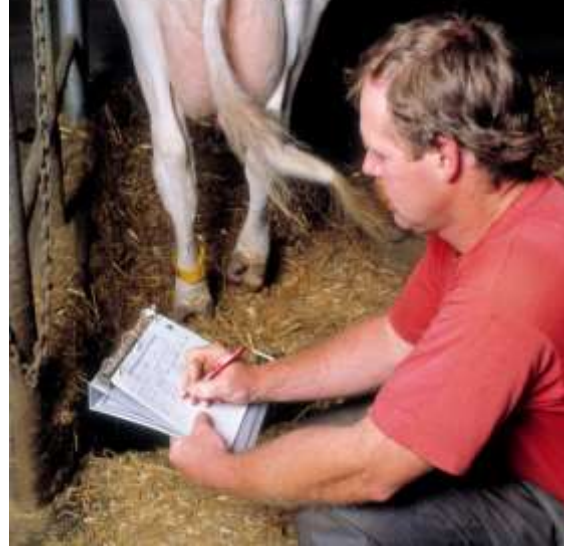
David Wiens



# Assessing Dairy Cattle Care



## Milk Quality



## Traceability



## Food Safety

*pro* **Action**

## Biosecurity



## Animal Care



## Environment



## Why?

Dairy farmers want to be leaders

Be proactive instead of reactive

Move forward together

Build on what we already have

Improve and be more profitable

Are aware of pressures on retailers, food companies

Strengthen the message, not just our image/ brands



# Farmers care

Animal care makes sense to farmers

Animal care is a shared value

*'I take care of my cows and my cows take care of me'*

Farmers have long tradition of investing in cow comfort  
Herd improvement, genetics, etc.

Research has demonstrated comfortable cows give  
more milk, live longer



# Brief history





# Animal care developments

2009

Code of Practice developed by the National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC) and DFC

2012-13

NFACC led a process to convert the Code to on-farm assessment, which involved a small pilot on farms

2014-15

DFC revised the program material, developed training material, conducted a second pilot on farms across Canada



# Who helped develop the program?

- 2 NFACC rep (secretariat, process)
- 4 farmers
- 3 farmer association staff
- 2 provincial CQM coordinators
- 1 processor representative (Gay Lea)
- 3 researchers in dairy animal health & welfare
- 1 veterinarian
- 1 assessor (PAACO-certified, specialized in dairy)
- 1 extension service specialist (Valacta)
- 1 retail/food service representative (Tim Horton's)
- 1 Canadian Federation of Humane Societies

# Developing an assessment

## Spring 2011

NFACC approached DFC to help develop the 'Model'

## Aug 2011

NFACC consultation of ag & food stakeholders on the Model

## 2012-2013

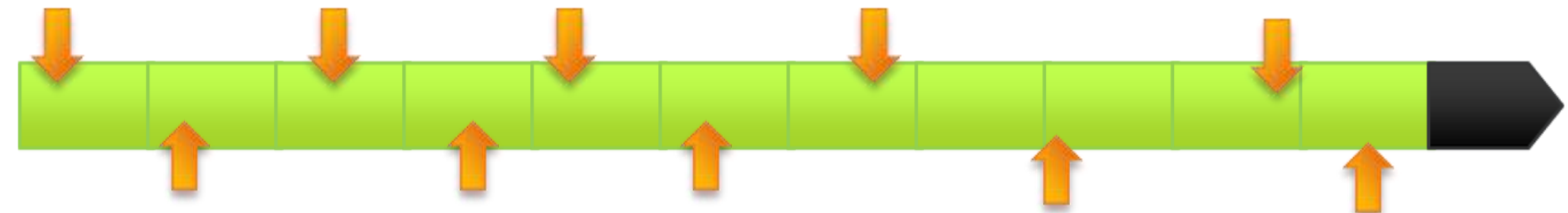
7 meetings /calls of group to develop DRAFT program

## May-July 2013

37 farms participate in pilot

## 2014

DFC takes draft program to develop validation list + workbook



## June 2011

Board approves the participation to help NFACC

## Nov 2011

Dairy group formed to develop dairy program based on NFACC Model

## Feb 2013

First pilot test on UBC farm  
**March** – training of validators

## Dec 2013

Draft program given to DFC

## Oct 14-Feb 2015

Pilot project with DFC workbook





What is the animal care module about?



# Measuring animal care/ well-being

DFC has a long tradition of funding research.

**Animal Care** is a key priority area.

We asked respected dairy welfare researchers to look at the Code and how to measure animal care.

Research suggested “animal-based measure” (ex: injury, cleanliness) to measure several Code requirements.

Recognize management practices that ensure consistency among practices of different family members and other employees.



## 2014-15 pilot project

Over 120 farms across the country participated

Cross-section of farm types (small/large, old/new, etc.)

Included various experts – veterinarians, validators, classifiers, farmers - tested program requirements, training, assessment protocols, validation protocol

We received valuable feedback in February

# The Code's sections



Housing



Feed & Water



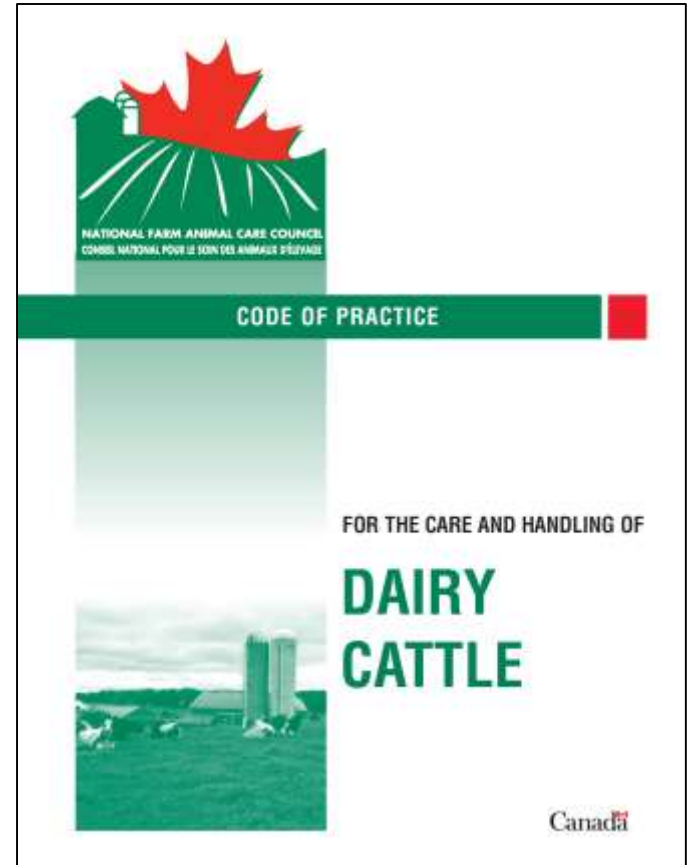
Animal health



Handling & shipping of  
animals



Training and  
communicating with  
workers





You manage what  
you measure.

*Temple Grandin*



# 3 types of measures

## Animal-Based Measures

3 measures: body condition, injuries & lameness

## Management Measures

- **4 Standard Operating Procedures** calf feeding, animal health practices & shipping cattle
- **1 Corrective Action Plan** non-ambulatory cattle

## Input / Resource Measures

**requirements:**  
Stocking density requirements  
Bedding is provided



# Animal-based measures

Objective of these measures – **body condition scoring, injuries, lameness** – is to document and monitor animals on the farm & make changes to improve if needed.

Providing report card and allow farmers to compare with their peers.

Pilot demonstrated majority met the standards of draft program

You should strive for and be able to demonstrate continuous improvement until you meet the targets.

**Example- Body Condition Score**

**Code: <15% of animals**

# The questionnaire used in pilot

Section	Topics
<b>Housing</b> (8 questions)	Housing for calves, heifers and bulls Stocking density Cleanliness of animals Calving area Designated area of sick and injured cattle Electric trainers
<b>Feed &amp; water</b>	<b>Colostrum management and calf feeding</b> Heifer ration Access to a clean water source



# Questionnaire

Section	Topics
<b>Animal health</b>	<p>Animal health practices (disbudding/dehorning, castration, extra teats)*</p> <p>Prompt medical care</p> <p>Euthanasia</p> <p>Body condition scoring</p> <p>Hock, knee and neck injuries*</p> <p>Lameness*</p> <p>Corrective action for thin, injured or lame animals</p> <p>Inspect cattle's feet</p> <p>Restraint equipment</p> <p>Full tails*</p> <p>Branding</p>

# Questionnaire

Section	Topics
<b>Handling and shipping animals</b>	Electric prods Shipping cattle*
<b>Staff training &amp; communication</b>	Train all animal handlers on quiet handling techniques Downed animals*

# Feedback from pilot

It is an additional task, but it is easy to do, it is achievable and necessary to prove that my animals are treated well.

In general, the program makes sense. Most of what we did already meets the requirements.

I like that we can show animals are well taken care of, and that we are there for them, even if our barn is not the most modern.

Simple, fast and a way to showcase what is already done on our farms in Quebec.

## Feedback from pilot



I liked that it covered all the animals, from young calves to the milking cows.

We like that now we are able to show the public we are putting effort into keeping our cows healthy. The audit/walk through was most efficient.

Having someone come in to view and score the cows, another set of eyes is always good.

I liked taking the time to stop and observe the animals and see that there are things that need to improve.



## General Observations

The majority of farmers participating were able to meet the standards set for the pilot, without needing to make major changes to their practices

We were able to see that farmers were interested in improving and to meet high standards. They are not wanting to simply meet minimum regulations.

# Benefits

1. Provide assurances to buyers

We think farmers should **lead** in defining sustainability and quality, *with* experts in dairy industry.

2. Celebrate achievements of farmers, assist them in meeting their management goals for animal health, care & welfare

Individual gains for farmers: increased productivity

Collective gain: independent certification reinforces image of/ confidence in Canadian dairy



## Benefits

3. Provide a mechanism for continuous improvement in animal care and welfare

Program will be implemented on all farms.

First 2 years on farms: Advice, training, education.

4. Tech transfer fits well as research and experience will inform future changes to the Code of Practice. That is continuous improvement.



# Special thank you to

Valacta

Holstein Canada

Canadian Association of Bovine Veterinarians

For their generous and precious participation in our pilot project and their ongoing commitment to our industry and to proAction





## Process in 2015 and beyond

Seek approval of DFC Board, DFC Delegates

Seek client support

Train producers, validators, staff, stakeholders, etc.

Implement on farms

Assess farms

Validate and register farms

Design and implement process to measure success



## Useful farmer resources

- Veterinarians & other farmers
- Code of Practice [dairyfarmers.ca/proAction](http://dairyfarmers.ca/proAction)
- Cow Signals [cowsignals.com/](http://cowsignals.com/)
- The Barn, Source of Comfort [valacta.com/](http://valacta.com/)
- Research [dairyresearch.ca/cow-comfort.php](http://dairyresearch.ca/cow-comfort.php)
  
- Elements of programs in other countries
  - i.e. F.A.R.M. videos [nationaldairyfarm.com/](http://nationaldairyfarm.com/)

# Animal care assessment



Is about	Is <u>not</u> about
Measuring care, comfort, well-being	Replacing laws, regulations, or existing authorities
Measuring outcome: healthy comfortable animals	Pushing one type of barn over another
Measuring improvement over time, individual & collective	Dictating what strategies to put in place to improve a farm's score
Encouraging improvement and celebrating progress	Requiring major investment