

industry WATCH LIST

- Animal Care
- Antibiotics residues
- Milk labeling
- Nutrition
- Supplemental hormones
- Animal activism**

- Organic
- Dairy & weight loss
- Safety
- Environment
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- Manure management
- Water usage

- BSE
- FMD
- Pesticides



High-impact Food safety

Your Dairy Checkoff in Action – The following update is provided by Dairy Management Inc. (DMI), which manages the national dairy checkoff program on behalf of America's dairy producers and dairy importers. DMI is the domestic and international planning and management organization responsible for increasing sales of and demand for dairy products and ingredients.



Address fictional accounts of agriculture

Critics of modern food production are going to great lengths to bring fictional, and often misleading, stories about “industrial agriculture” to the consuming public.

A recent example is Chipotle Mexican Grill's series “Farmed and Dangerous” on the streaming television service www.Hulu.com. The four-episode series uses satire to advance the chain's marketing platform that today's food system is controlled by “corporate agribusiness” and therefore is unsustainable and unhealthy.

The series raises concerns about American agriculture's reliance on fossil fuels, animal care on large-scale operations and technologies such as hormone supplements, antibiotics and genetic modification.

Data show Chipotle's foray into the entertainment business is not a big hit with consumers. On Feb. 17, when the series premiered, online conversation about “Farmed and Dangerous” represented just 3 percent

of total mentions of Chipotle, and within days it fell to about 1 percent.

Online conversations critical of large-scale agriculture provide farmers an opportunity to educate the public in a truthful way about where dairy foods come from, how they are made and the industry's commitment to renewable energy. That helps build trust – and people buy products from trusted sources.

With the support of the Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy's Consumer Confidence Committee, the checkoff is leading an industry-wide initiative to educate the public about the goodness of dairy by:

- ◆ Providing farmers, the industry and consumer advocates with the resources (including training and the website www.DairyGood.org) to join conversations with consumers and thought leaders.

- ◆ Activating credible third-party voices, including the World Wildlife

Fund, Feeding America and the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.

- ◆ Engaging partners – For example, Domino's Pizza “Delivering Dairy Goodness” connects farmers and consumers through on-farm and in-store community events.

- ◆ Publicizing the progress of the checkoff-led U.S. Dairy Sustainability Commitment – Documenting the dairy industry's responsible stewardship practices and advances in renewable energy helps position dairy positively against anti-agriculture campaigns and dispel the characterization that American agriculture is overly dependent on fossil fuels.

Over the long term, these efforts will maintain and grow trust in dairy among consumers – and may even bring those experimenting with imitation products back to cows' milk. **PD**

Should I respond?

Yes. Rather than mounting a counterattack against a specific organization or critic, be proactive in sharing your farm story on an everyday basis. Talk about animal care, environmental stewardship, and milk quality and safety as part of how you provide your community with wholesome milk and dairy products.

These conversations can take place one-on-one or through social media. Keep in mind that the vast majority of consumers are looking for information about food production from trustworthy, experienced sources, and farmers rank high in credibility.

If you are asked about dairy's environmental impact and reliance on fossil fuels, here are points to consider:

- ✓ Dairy farms and dairy companies are transforming waste into natural fertilizer and renewable energy, which in turn reduces our reliance on fossil fuels.
- ✓ Many dairy farms are reducing their energy use with energy-efficient equipment and practices. Since 2011, more than 500 U.S. dairy farmers have received a farm energy-efficiency audit identifying electricity savings of millions of kilowatt hours.

Related resources

“DairyGood.org: Where Good Comes From” helps connect consumers to America's dairy farm families to learn more about where their food comes from:
www.dairygood.org



DairyGood.org, “Dairies work to reduce their carbon footprint”
www.dairygood.org/learn-about-dairy/sustainable-farming/2013/12/17/18/45/dairy-works-to-decrease-carbon-footprint

DairyGood.org, “Dairies remain committed to cow health and milk safety”
www.dairygood.org/facts-and-myths/animal-care/2013/12/17/15/22/dairies-remain-committed-to-cow-health-and-milk-safety

Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy / U.S. Dairy Industry Sustainability Commitment
www.usdairy.com/sustainability

✓ Dairy companies and transporters participate in the U.S. EPA Energy Star and SmartWay programs to identify energy-efficient practices. In fact, dairy plants make up a considerable percentage of all companies participating in the Energy Star Challenge.

Here are key points to communicate about cow comfort or dairy cows being raised indoors:

- ✓ While dairy farming doesn't look like it did in the past, cow comfort remains a top priority. Cows have clean, dry bedding and constant access to food and water.
- ✓ Many dairy farms feature “freestall” barns that allow cows to walk around as they please and to eat, drink and sleep whenever and wherever they choose. Freestall barns also provide shade and protection from bad weather.
- ✓ Regardless of the type of barn, farmers make sure it is well ventilated and well lit. Many barns also feature fans and water misters that keep the cows cool and comfortable in the warm months.

Test your answer

Shouldn't all cows graze on pasture?

ANSWER: Some cows graze on pasture, but it's not practical in many locations and climates. In general, the quality of the feed for dairy cows is important because it affects the quality of the milk. I work with a professional animal nutritionist to develop a balanced and nutritious diet for my cows. Our feed ingredients vary by season and geography. Typically they are forage (hay or corn silage), grains (corn, wheat and barley), protein sources (soybeans and canola) and vitamin and mineral supplements. Medicated feed is never used on dairy farms to prevent disease among the cows being milked.

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Rodney and Dorothy Elliott
Drumgoon Dairy (milking 2,500)
Lake Norden, SD



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