ADSA: Setting the Record Straight

Effective Methods for Responding to Misinformation in Traditional and Social Media

August 11, 2011
Housekeeping

- Please mute your phone
- If you have “hold music,” please do NOT put us on hold. Hang up and redial when available
- We will have time for questions and answers throughout the webinar
WELCOME

Bob Roberts
President, ADSA
Update on ADSA Media Initiative

- ADSA Spokesperson Program
- Media Training „101“ Webinars
INTRODUCTION

Eric Pehle
Executive Vice President, Weber Shandwick

INTRODUCTION
Today’s Objectives

• Learn why it’s important to provide scientific and personal perspective to inaccurate media stories

• Learn various channels available to respond to misinformation

• Learn practical tips to develop effective responses
Today’s Speakers

Bob Roberts
President,
ADSA

Michele Williams
Director,
Weber Shandwick

Julie Ketay
Senior Vice President,
Weber Shandwick

Frank Orrico, Ph.D
Executive Vice President,
Weber Shandwick
Today’s Agenda

• Why Respond to Media Articles?

• Guidelines for Effective Media Responses

• Messaging Exercise

• Q&A
WHY RESPOND TO MEDIA ARTICLES?

Julie Ketay
Senior Vice President, Weber Shandwick
What You Told Us

Challenges:
• Being misquoted/misrepresented
• Responding to critical stories about antibiotic use and animal care
• Responding in a timely manner

Key Areas of Interest:
• Leveraging social media
• Knowing when to respond to stories, and when to leave alone
• Ensuring responses are effective
Why Respond To Negative Media Coverage?

- Reporters are more crunched for time than ever before
- Thanks to blogs and social media, anyone can be a "reporter"
- The lines are blurred between unbiased, mainstream news and opinions
- Unreliable sources viewed as "facts" on Internet
  - A scientific perspective is required to balance the conversation
The New York Times

F.D.A and Dairy Industry Spar Over Testing of Milk

The Food and Drug Administration is concerned that antibiotics might be contaminating the milk of American dairy cows.

By WILLIAM NEUMAN
Published: January 25, 2011
How Do Stories Become Viral?

F.D.A and Dairy Industry Spar Over Testing of Milk

WILLIAM NEUMAN
Published: Wednesday, January 26, 2011 at 5:18 a.m.
Last Modified: Wednesday, January 26, 2011 at 5:18 a.m.

Each year, federal inspectors find illegal levels of antibiotics in hundreds of older dairy cows bound for the slaughterhouse. Concerned that those antibiotics might also be contaminating the milk Americans drink, the Food and Drug Administration intended to begin tests this month on the milk from farms that had repeatedly sold cows tainted by drug residue.
What’s the Best Approach?
Evaluate the Coverage

- Did the story include unbalanced/unfair reporting?
- Is there a factual error in the story that can be easily corrected?
- Is the story likely to misguide consumers?
- Does the reporter write on this subject often? Use the same, inaccurate source on an ongoing basis?
- Does the story represent a timely, ongoing trend or hot topic in the media?
- Is the story gaining traction online, or in social media?
What Can You Do?

• Letter to the Editor
• Correction
• Web Comment
• Educational Outreach
• Op-Ed
• Blog Post
• Share Information on Facebook/Twitter
Using Chat Feature

• Select who you would like to send your message to from the drop down box at the bottom of the chat feature on the right-hand side of your screen. Enter your question in the space provided and click send.

• For this exercise direct your questions to Julie (Presenter).
Dehorning: 'Standard Practice' on Dairy Farms

By ANNA SCHECTER and DREW SANDHOLM
Jan. 28, 2010

According to figures from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, more than nine out of ten dairy farms practice dehorning, meaning the farmers cut or burn the horns off of cows. But while there is serious pressure to end the controversial practice of tail docking, in which farmers remove the ends of cows' tails, there is no sign of similar momentum to stop dehorning.

Lyndon Odell, CEO of Willet Dairy, one of New York state's largest dairies, said dehorning is a "standard practice in agriculture" and done to protect both the animals and dairy employees. "Part of the issue with this is cow injury," said Odell, "and also safety for the employees. If you have an animal running around with a sharp horn, they can gore other animals that are in the same group with them or they can injure an employee that's working with the animals."
GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE MEDIA RESPONSES

Michele Williams
Director, Weber Shandwick
Letter to the Editor - Guidelines

- **When to Use:** Story is unbalanced/biased, and contains a myriad misinformation
- **Suggested Word Count:** ~ 150 words
- **Content:** Briefly discuss your POV using 1-2 supporting points and consumer-friendly language
- **Timing:** Quick response is critical for publications – for dailies, within a two-day period after an article appears
- **Approach:** Reader should be able to quickly understand your main point. Messaging should be easy to understand, educational and confident in tone
- **How:** Most publications have a specific e-mail address or form on the website to submit LTEs
Responding to Biased/Unbalanced Reporting

Forgo meat, cheese once a week to save energy, EWG says

By Elizabeth Weise, USA TODAY

If every American skipped meat and cheese one day a week, environmentally it would be the same as the country driving 91 billion fewer miles a year. That's the figure calculated by the Environmental Working Group, which in a report out today urges the nation to eat less meat and cheese, both for health and the environment.

The call joins a growing movement advocating once-a-week meat-free meals, from an International Meatless Monday campaign and a European Veggie Days movement to decisions by some Catholic bishops to suggest a return to the no-meat Fridays of old.

The EWG report is the most recent in a long list calculating the greenhouse gases emitted in food production.

Cheese was third, at 13.5. That's much higher than milk, because "it takes about 10 pounds of milk to make 1 pound of cheese," says Kari Hamerschlag, who wrote the report.
Sample Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

A side order of skepticism should accompany the Environmental Working Group report on environmentally responsible diets (“Forgo meat, cheese once a week to save energy, EWG says,” 7/18/11) because it’s light on empirical data and heavy on imprecise projections.

The U.S. dairy industry uses a science-based approach to measure and improve our environmental footprint from farm to table, and has set a voluntary goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from farm to table 25% by 2020.

When it comes to recommendations to reduce the carbon footprint of our diet, it’s misguided to compare foods without factoring in nutrient content. Following EWG’s suggestion to limit certain foods would take a needless toll on people’s lifelong health. Cheese makes significant nutrient contributions to the American diet, providing 21 percent of the calcium, 9 percent of the protein and 9 percent of the vitamin A, to name a few.

Americans can reduce our environmental footprint by driving less, turning down the air conditioner, wasting less of what we buy and eating naturally nutrient-rich foods.
Correction - Guidelines

- **When to Use:** Article contains factual error that is easily corrected
- **Content:** Provide the correct information with supporting materials
- **Timing:** As soon as the error is identified
- **Approach:** Positive, open tone but stress the importance of correcting the inaccuracy to avoid misleading readers
- **How:** Call or e-mail the reporter directly who wrote the article with the mistake
Web Comment - Guidelines

- **When to Use:** Article contains inaccurate information that could mislead consumers
- **Suggested Word Count:** ~ 100 words
- **Content:** Quickly address the misinformation in the article; include your credentials; whenever possible, provide links to appropriate citation or additional information
- **Timing:** Within one day of the story being posted online
- **Approach:** Focus on correcting the misinformation, not criticizing author
- **How:** Post directly to the online story of concern; usually found at the end of the article
As a dairy foods scientist, I feel it’s important to say the claims made in this article about cheese are, frankly, a ridiculous theory and are not supported by the Food and Drug Administration or any reputable scientist. Compounds with similar characteristics are actually found in or produced during digestion of a variety of both plant and animal-based foods that are good sources of protein, including rice, soy and wheat. The idea that consuming cheese or any of these foods could have even a weak, morphine-like effect is highly unlikely from a neuroscience standpoint.
Educational Outreach - Guidelines

• **When to Use:** Influential reporter and/or reporter who covers the subject matter frequently

• **Content:** Outline of your point-of-view, with supporting messages and references that back up your statements

• **Timing:** When misleading article comes out and/or you have new, related information to share

• **Approach:** Be positive and engaging

• **How:** Engage the reporter directly with a phone call, if possible
Recent Example: Setting the Record Straight

**Mail Online**

It's not all white: The cocktail of up to 20 chemicals in a glass of milk

**The Times of India | Science**

A glass of milk contains cocktail of 20 chemicals

**HuffPost Food**

Painkillers, Antibiotics, Growth Hormones Among The 20 Chemicals Found In Typical Glass Of Milk
Setting the Record Straight

Facebook milk post making the rounds is not about U.S. milk anyway

Published: Wednesday, October 11, 2017

By Rosemary Shrager Follow

A U.K. Daily Mail post reported that Facebook is making the rounds of Facebook with a story about milk in the U.S. that is not accurate, prompting plenty of comments.

It's opening sentence: "A glass of milk can contain a cocktail of up to 20 painkillers, antidepressants, hormones used by people, scientists have warned."

But here's the but:

First, that wasn't a story about the United States — the story was based on a paper on Determination of Aromatic Amines and Diarylpropionic Acids in Solid-Phase Extracted Cow's Milk. A paper in the Journal of Agricultural Food Chemistry.

Reported in the U.K. that a test that could detect these contaminants in processing.

Michael Schutz, professor of animal science at Purdue University, said that in the U.S., where strict laws dictate the path of milk from cow to consumer, milk only contacts stainless steel or glass once it leaves the cow during processing.

"That will make a huge difference," he said, referring to the likelihood of milk being exposed to contaminants.

"There was no suggestion that (scientists) were looking at milk as it came from the cow," Schutz said.

To the Facebook commenters who caution that adults should not drink cow's milk because of the possible cumulative effect of a lifetime of consuming even such minuscule levels, Schutz said, U.S. safety standards are built taking that into account.

What about the antibiotics mentioned in the story? To suggest that they might be consumed in "a glass of milk," is misleading, too, he said.

It is true that sick cows are sometimes treated with antibiotics, Schutz said, but in the United States every tanker of milk is tested for the class of drugs used to treat cows, and if any detectable levels are noted "it doesn't get used for anything, not even pet food," he said. "It gets dumped."
Op-Ed - Guidelines

- **When to Use:** Story is an ongoing trend, or hot topic in the media and you have an opposing point-of-view to share

- **Suggested Word Count:** ~ 750 words

- **Content:** Lead with the strongest argument and follow up with examples to support your claim

- **Timing:** Within two days of heightened news/conversations on a critical topic

- **Approach:** Be controversial, but not outrageous. Inform the reader with clear, direct, yet personable language

- **How:** Typically managed by the Opinion Editor; submit via e-mail or review the publication website for submission information
Blog Response - Guidelines

• **When to Use:** When you have an ongoing perspective on specific topic.

• **Suggested Word Count:** ~ 500 words, per blog post

• **Content:** Proactive communication to establish yourself as an expert in the dairy science community

• **Timing:** ASAP during media cycle

• **Approach:** Informative and educational tone focused on your expert opinion regarding various topics. Highlight your experiences and work on the topic. Link to relevant and other helpful information to source your claims

• **How:** If creating your own, sign up and create an account on a blogging website; popular ones include, [blogger.com](http://blogger.com) and [wordpress.com](http://wordpress.com)
Twitter/Facebook - Guidelines

- **When to Use:** A story is being shared online, and readers are focused on misinformation
- **Word Count:** 140 characters or less per tweet/ 50-100 words for Facebook
- **Content:** Brief comment or point of view on an issue, ideally linking to additional information
- **Timing:** Immediate
- **Approach:** Be proactive and informative, not argumentative
- **How:** Monitor conversations by searching for hashtags or following influencers on Twitter and Facebook
Texas Sheriff Investigates Animal-Cruelty Video Rattling Cattle Market

By LESTER ALDRICH

County authorities in Texas are investigating a cattle farm for animal cruelty based on a graphic video of abuse being circulated by an animal-rights group.

The Castro Country Sheriff’s office confirmed Wednesday that it is investigating abuse captured in a hidden-camera video and made public by Chicago-based Mercy For Animals. The video shows a farm employee hitting a cow in the head with a pitchfork and standing on the neck of a calf among other instances of cruelty.

The sheriff’s office plans to submit its findings to the district attorney for possible prosecution, chief deputy sheriff Tom Taylor said in an interview.

The video, which has been posted to the Internet, pressured live-cattle futures on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange. Traders were concerned its graphic nature would cause a pullback in consumer demand for beef.
Sample Messages

• The actions depicted on the Mercy for Animals video are appalling and completely unacceptable.

• I can tell you from personal experience, the actions in this video do not reflect the practices of the thousands of hard working dairy farm families across the U.S. who care for their animals every day.

• As a dairy scientist, I can tell you we continually work together with farmers to explore different ways to improve the comfort of dairy cows.
Texas Sheriff Investigates Animal-Cruelty Video Rattling Cattle Market

By LESTER ALDRICH

County authorities in Texas are investigating a cattle farm for animal cruelty after a video of abuse being circulated by an animal-rights group.

The Castro Country Sheriff's office confirmed Wednesday that it is investigating the case, which shows a farm employee hitting a cow in the head with a pick ax and standing in a stall near a calf among other instances of cruelty.

The sheriff's office plans to submit its findings to the district attorney for possible prosecution, said chief deputy sheriff Tom Taylor said in an interview.

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After Mercy for Animals video, check out alternative view of calf care on our Facebook page. tiny.cc/6ozda dairy animalwelfare

Concerned about how dairy calves are raised? See how our 4th generation family farm does it http://youtu.be/PqF59K5g9Xg mercy for animals
Responding Online

Ray-Lin Dairy
A PROGRESSIVE CALIFORNIA DAIRY FARM BLOG

Is going Vegan the answer to farm animal abuse?
POSTED BY RAYLINDAIRY · APRIL 19, 2011 · 11 COMMENTS

NO the answer is to hold animal abusers accountable for their actions and honor those who do the right thing by the animals.

National Dairy FARM is a program created by dairy farmers to set a baseline for animal care and move forward from there, our farm along with many others in the US have embraced this program to help weed out the bad actors.

No Mercy for Animal Abuse
Posted on April 19, 2011 by Mike Haley
Frank Orrico, Ph.D
Executive Vice President, Weber Shandwick

MESSAGING EXERCISE
What Would You Do?


By ANNA SCHETTER and BRIAN ROSS (@brianross)
Jan. 25, 2010

Undercover videos produced by animal rights groups are fueling a debate over the need for new laws to regulate the treatment of American dairy cows.

The graphic videos include one made inside a huge New York dairy operation where cows never go outside, have the ends of their tails cut off in painful procedures without anesthesia, and are seen being abused by one employee who hits a cow over the head with a wrench when it refuses to move.

An investigator for the group Mercy for Animals worked at the New York dairy farm, Willet Dairy, one of the largest in the state, for two months as a mechanic. Willet supplies to Leprino Foods, based in Denver, which produces mozzarella cheese and other cheese products that are used at chains including Pizza Hut, Papa John's, and Domino's.

"These animals are really treated as little more than milk-producing machines," said Nathan Runkle, executive director of Mercy for Animals. "The overall environment at this facility was really a culture of cruelty and neglect."
Polling Question
What Would You Do?


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"These animals are really treated as little more than milk-producing machines," said Nathan Runkle, executive director of Mercy for Animals. "The overall environment at this facility was really a culture of cruelty and neglect."
This video was shot by activists who are more concerned with promoting their vegan agenda than the welfare of dairy cows. The dairy industry has worked with animal care experts to establish guidelines for the proper care of dairy cows. For example:

- Farmers employ professional nutritionists to develop a scientifically formulated, balanced and nutritious diet for their cows which includes hay, grains, protein sources and vitamins and minerals.
- Cows receive regular veterinary care, including periodic check-ups, preventative vaccinations and prompt treatment of illness.
- Dairy cows have access to feed as well as fresh, clean water 24 hours a day. Many dairy farms use “free-stall housing,” which is a type of barn that allows cows to eat, drink and sleep whenever and wherever they choose.

A coalition of dairy organizations, farmers and dairy food companies launched the National Dairy FARM Program in 2009, a verifiable, national animal well-being program that provides additional management tools to U.S. dairy farmers, and further demonstrates the industry’s commitment to animal well-being. You can learn more about the program by visiting: [www.nationaldairyfarm.com](http://www.nationaldairyfarm.com).
What Points Do You Want To Communicate?

- Use the chat function to share a few key points you want to communicate.

Please direct your comments to Frank (Presenter).
As a dairy scientist who works regularly with dairy farmers, I can tell you this video does not reflect the practices of the thousands of hard working dairy farm families who care for their animals every day.

I continually work with farmers to explore different ways to improve the comfort of dairy cows. But don"t take my word for it, take a trip to a dairy farm in your area to see for yourself.
Questions?
Bob Roberts
President, ADSA

CLOSE
Thank You!

Please feel free to contact us for additional information:

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