Strategies for Improving US Dairy Cattle Welfare

Animal welfare is emerging as one of the key social concerns regarding animal agriculture. While initial focus on animal welfare concerning livestock in the US has largely been directed to the swine (gestation crates), poultry (layer hen housing space), and veal (crate use and size) industries; discussion of key dairy cattle welfare issues such as tail docking, use of tie stall dairy facilities, tethering of calves, and downer cow handling indicate that the dairy industry is far from immune to public scrutiny of its practices. To date there have been no attempts within the United States to address the gap between dairy cattle welfare science and practice in a conference setting that is exclusively devoted to this topic. Clearly identifying ways to transfer research results and engage industry specialists to work with farmers in ways that lead to sustained changes on farm will be key to promoting a sustainable dairy industry within the United States and abroad.

Conference Objective

The objective of this proposed Discover Conference on Strategies for Improving US Dairy Cattle Welfare is to engage the US dairy industry in a conversation of the growing importance of addressing key welfare concerns industry-wide.

Conference Goals

- Define animal welfare for dairy cattle within the context of the impact of other issues on other industries and of welfare issues in other food animal industries.
- Describe the key findings from a number of very successful lines of research defining animal welfare and addressing practical problems in the care and housing of dairy cattle.
- Create opportunities for open discussion of contentious animal welfare issues among industry professionals and scientists working in the dairy industry.
- Encourage conference participants to act as information multipliers thus facilitating proactive adoption of science-based practices that result in improved dairy cattle welfare.

Conference Themes

- What is Animal Welfare?
- Understanding and Clarifying Attitudes of Animal Welfare
- Housing and Management of Dairy Cows
- Facilitating Change Benchmarking and Best Practices on the Dairy Farm
- Developing a Strategy for the US: Moving Forward

Who Should Attend?

This conference is organized to appeal to academic and industry representatives of many aspects dairy husbandry including facility, equipment, and technology design; animal ethology; veterinary health, immunology, and pharmaceutical business; nutrition, genetics, and other areas. Graduate students are encouraged to attend.

Registration

Registration postmarked by April 27, 2014 is $375.00 for ADSA-ASAS-ARPAS members and $425.00 for non-members, which includes sessions and most meals. After April 27, the registration fee will be $475.00 member/$525.00 non-member, and will be accepted on an availability basis.

Accommodations & Travel

All participants are responsible for making their own lodging reservations. The conference will be held at Eaglewood Resort and Spa in Itasca, IL. Reservations can be made online at the Conference Accommodations link at http://www.adsa.org/Meetings/DiscoverConferences/27thDiscoverConference.aspx