

Dairy Workforce Development and Training Programs



Contact: Robert Hagevoort | dairydoc@nmsu.edu | 806-786-3421

Development & Implementation of a comprehensive dairy workforce training program

Need: average herd size of New Mexico dairies is roughly ten times the U.S. average herds size. Effective training and development of current and future employees is imperative. Middle management development is becoming increasingly important. **Program goal:** improve employee performance metrics.

Program impact: approximately 7,500 employees have been trained on dairy safety and animal handling. Training is provided in a preferred language (English, Spanish, or K'iche). Training effectiveness is a key evaluation metric. Due to processor and customer demands, National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) created a Workforce Development Task Force (2017), which developed a Dairy Safety Reference Manual in English and Spanish (Douphrate and Hagevoort, 2019). Idaho Dairymen's Association (IDA) adopted the training program in 2018 with significant processor and co-op support. Dairy West (ID & UT) in 2023 decided to implement a workforce development program utilizing these resources. NMSU's dairy workforce development is considered an industry leading example, with program details utilized on some of the largest US dairy operations. Additional modules added: Fitness to Transport (2022), Maternity & Calf Care (2022), Feeds & Feeding (2020). Combined YouTube views of [video library](#) (12/24) is 179K total, or over 20,000 views/yr, view count up 25% from 2022. Number of invited talks on Dairy Workforce Labor issues since Jan. 1, 2020: 17 (some of the largest dairy and pork industry conferences). Website resources: <https://dairy.nmsu.edu/index.html>

Program outcomes and impacts:

- Training modules on dairy safety awareness and animal handling
- Modules available on mobile devices in English, Spanish & K'iche
- One third of New Mexico dairy workforce trained
- Idaho Dairymen's Association (IDA) adopted program (2018)
- NMPF created Workforce Development Taskforce (2018)
- Taskforce developed Dairy Safety Reference Manual (2019)
- Module Feeds & Feeding developed with Diamond V (2019)
- Feeds & Feeding released on mobile devices for training (2020)
- Maternity & Calf Care developed with IDA (2022)
- Fitness to Transport developed with FARM & Elanco (2022)
- Dairy West implementing program based on developed resources (2023)
- CCQA (Calf Care Quality Assurance) being developed (2023-2024)
- Assisting NCBA on Spanish BQA version (2024)



BE BOLD. Shape the Future.

College of Agricultural, Consumer, Environmental Sciences
NMSU Dairy Extension Program

New Mexico State University is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer and educator.
NMSU and the U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating.