

Livestock Care Standards Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

A meeting of the Livestock Care Standards Advisory Council (LCSAC) was held on February 12, 2014 in the Extension classroom at 617 Comstock Road in Berlin, VT. The following members were present:

Dr. Kristin Haas (KH); Dr. Ruth Blauwiel (RB); Diane Bothfeld (DB); Melody Squier (MS); Dr. Kent Henderson (KEH); Dr. Todd Pritchard (TP); Paul Saenger (PS); Marcy Wisnowski (MW).

A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order by DB at 9:17 AM.

The following public observers (affiliations) were present:

Joanne Bourbeau (Humane Society of the United States); Carrie Abels (Vermont's Local Banquet; Humaneitarian.org); Mark Rodgers (AgriMark and dairy farmer).

The November 2013 meeting minutes were unanimously approved as written, following a motion made by RB and seconded by MS.

New Council member Dr. Todd Pritchard was introduced to members present, and he reviewed his pertinent qualifications, including poultry/bovine farm experience, expertise in HACCP plan development and a teaching position at UVM. Dr. Pritchard replaces Londa Nwadike on the Council, and has been appointed to a three year term.

The November 11, 2014 meeting date was moved to November 12, 2014 in order to avoid a state holiday on November 11th.

There was no public comment offered during the first public comment period.

Mark Rodgers, dairy farmer from Glover and AgriMark Board member, spoke to the Council regarding the recent International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA) meeting; pertinent points made by him are the following:

- Industry prefers to use the term “well-being” rather than “welfare” as the latter is applicable to people
- Update on the FARM (Farmers Assuring Responsible Management) program:
 - The 2nd edition of the Program is now operational
 - 9,000 evaluations have been completed to date; 1,000 by AgriMark
 - FARM is currently voluntary but may be mandatory in the future
 - Some retailers/distributors may not be satisfied with FARM and may move toward establishing their own set of standards, which could be confusing for producers

- AgriMark has refused four members over the past 12 months for animal well-being issues
- Mr. Rodgers highlighted the importance of keeping all “nodes” along the food production chain well informed of issues related to animal well-being
- IDFA is taking on the challenge of educating producers on a national scale about issues related to animal well-being. They are partnering with National Milk Producers to do this, but the exact mechanism is unknown at this point.
- Mr. Rodgers feels that industry-led initiatives will drive animal well-being related change faster/more efficiently than any regulatory agency or legislative mandate could.
- Mr. Rodgers feels that there could be a mechanism in place to revoke licenses/permits to ship milk if animal well-being is not handled properly on a commercial dairy farm

A legislative update discussion was held. KMH reported that she presented the LCSAC annual report to the House Committee on Agriculture and that they were appreciative of the information. During this testimony, Representative Lawrence asked if there are any other ways that the House Committee on Agriculture could support the LCSAC. KMH posed this question to the LCSAC members present, and it was suggested by members that the Committee should be aware of the fact that some education/outreach initiatives could be enhanced by funding to cover workshops, training events and creation/distribution of printed materials. The question sparked a discussion regarding the membership of the LCSAC and whether there would be benefit to having a retailer or consumer on the Council. Members present agreed that this probably was not necessary but that it would be to the Council’s benefit to have more guest speakers who could inform members as to animal well-being perspectives from these sectors. This feedback was provided to Representative Lawrence via email by KMH following the meeting.

KMH provided an update on the livestock handling workshop held at the Grazing Conference. It was presented by Dr. Ben Bartlett (Extension veterinarian), was well attended (65+ attendees), and consisted of classroom and hands-on segments, the latter using live animal demos. Conversations will continue regarding ways in which Farm to Plate, UVM Extension and the LCSAC can partner to provide animal well-being resources for animal Ag industry members.

The draft letter regarding Act 83 (on-farm slaughter) was finalized. PS made a motion, seconded by RB, that the letter be sent to both legislative committees on agriculture under Chair Bothfeld’s signature with other members’ names listed as co-signatories. KMH agreed to send an email to Council members not present, informing them of this plan. A discussion was held regarding potential testimony points that could be made should the House or Senate Committees on Agriculture ask for LCSAC input. Suggestions included the following:

- Act 83 does not specify the methods of euthanasia or animal restraint, which could constitute animal well-being and human safety concerns
- Animal fear and improper stunning methods constitute animal well-being issues
- Act 83 does not take into account the need for prior animal handling experience/expertise

- Act 83 does not give consideration to exclusion of Specified Risk Materials (SRMs)
- Act 83 does not mandate that more than one means of euthanasia be available in the event that the first choice is not successful; this constitutes an animal well-being concern

It was decided that testimony could be further clarified if and when the request is made by the legislative committees for input from the LCSAC.

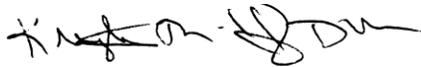
A second public comment period was held; the following points were made:

Joanne Bourbeau – The 2014 Animal Cruelty Investigation training dates have been set. They are Sept 2 (Level 1); Sept 5 (Level 2); Sept 24 (Level3). Dates for Level 4 (livestock focused) are currently being contemplated.S.237 – the civil forfeiture bill – deals with what happens to animals after they are seized during animal cruelty enforcement actions – hearing to be held on February 13, 2014.

Mark Rodgers – The water quality bill (586) has a section in it related to animal composting – does this have any animal well-being impacts? Section 711 of the Farm Bill deals with conducting animal research in order to enhance pre- and post-harvest food systems.

The meeting adjourned at 11:45 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K. Bourbeau" with a stylized flourish at the end.