

TIPS FOR MICHIGAN DAIRY VETERINARIANS TO HELP DAIRY FARMERS NAVIGATE A CRISIS

UDIM is here to help Michigan's dairy veterinarians and dairy farmers prepare for a crisis. Join us in helping protect the reputation of Michigan dairy farms, dairy farmers and dairy foods.

PROACTIVELY

- Encourage your dairy producer clients to complete an On-Farm Crisis Preparedness Plan. A farm crisis can range from a fire to a death to an undercover video. United Dairy Industry of Michigan (UDIM) has a template plan dairy producers can fill in and make their own. UDIM can also host small groups of farmers who want to create a crisis plan.
- The enclosed farm crisis contact magnet helps keep numbers handy. Make sure your clients include your clinic number and cell phone number. Write your number on the magnet prior to distributing it to help demonstrate your partnership with your clients.
- Encourage dairy producers to get to know their local police officers and firefighters. Invite them to the farm and point out all the access points to the farm and where large vehicles and equipment can park.
- Consider including National Milk Producers Federation's *See It. Stop It* in the employee protocol training programs you help your clients create. Use the materials to help empower farm employees to speak up and to help them understand how the initiative serves as an extension of your animal care goals and commitments. Make sure the dairy producer works with farm employees to sign the agreement to commit to the highest standards of animal care.
- Change the culture in the barn. Like cows, dairy farmers and veterinarians often have a set routine of when they walk through the barn. Change the schedule and change the culture. Encourage your farm owners to walk through the barn at an unexpected time. Make sure the farm team understands that your high standards of animal care are their standards as well. Make sure they understand their work is part of the bigger picture to supply safe food for families like theirs.
- Ask everyone to keep an eye out for suspicious activity. Activists will "scout out" a location several times before deciding to hold a large protest there.
- Know Michigan's animal cruelty laws. Be aware of any statutes that activists may attempt to manipulate to help their cause.

DIRECT YOUR CLIENTS TO CONTACT UDIM AT 517-349-8923 TO HELP CREATE THEIR CRISIS PLAN.

United Dairy Industry of Michigan
2163 Jolly Rd, Okemos, MI 48864

American Dairy Association of Michigan
Dairy Council of Michigan

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Contact us:
Jolene@milkmeansmore.org
or 517-349-8923

Visit our website at MilkMeansMore.org

IF YOU ARE CALLED TO HELP A DAIRY PRODUCER NAVIGATE THROUGH A CRISIS, HELP THEM FOLLOW THE STEPS OUTLINED BELOW.

1ST HOUR

- Assess the situation. Immediately contact the authorities/911 if the situation involves the health or wellbeing of a farmworker.
- Enact the farm crisis plan. Alert all crisis team members and make sure they know their roles.
- Call the cooperative and call UDIM at 517-349-8923.
- Contact all employees of the farm and inform them about the situation.
 - a. Reassure them the crisis team is doing everything to keep everyone protected.
 - b. Ask that they not share the information outside of the operation.
 - c. Inform them to direct all visitors or phone calls to a designated person.
 - d. Help them provide guidance about completing their jobs; they may have questions or the situation may hinder how they move forward.
- Identify an area on the farm where the team can meet and work from during the crisis.
- Work with UDIM to draft a statement to be distributed to the media.
- If you work with other veterinarians, alert them to the situation and share the appropriate information as they may be asked by other farmers.

2ND – 4TH HOUR

- Contact the stakeholder list (veterinarian, State Veterinarian, nutritionist, government agencies and others on the crisis list who need to know about the situation, assist in the team's response, or direct to additional resources).
- Contact the farm's insurance agent, if appropriate, about the situation and possible claims.
- Monitor farm social media accounts.
- Be prepared to post a statement to the farm website, personal Facebook account, or other social media platforms.

ONGOING

- Keep UDIM informed.
- Monitor social media accounts.
- Respond to media requests with the help of UDIM.
- Keep a record of everyone the farm team talks with about the situation: what the call entailed, key learnings gained and the tone of the conversation.
- Summarize at the end of each day an overview of the day's activities and share it with the team. This should include: the list of conversations, steps taken, and decisions made.

TIPS

- If family and friends offer to help, take them up on the offer. Let them arrange food to feed the farm team, or run errands so the family doesn't have to leave the farm and be confronted with questions.
- Note that some family and friends may not know what to say or do. That doesn't mean they don't care — they just don't know what the farm team members are going through.
- Get food and rest. This applies to the entire farm crisis team.
- Animals have to be fed, milked, and cared for. You may need to remind team members of their role caring for the animals as they may want to help with the crisis response or may be overwhelmed with the situation.
- Take time to process everything that happened and write it down. This will be valuable information in preparing for the next steps the farm team will need to take to recover from the crisis.

Direct your clients to contact UDIM at 517-349-8923 to help create their crisis plan.

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