EDUCATING DAIRY PRODUCERS TO SYSTEMATICALLY EVALUATE THE COWS THEY WISH TO CULL

Allison Moorman, Dr. Ann Godkin, Dr. Todd Duffield and Dr. Derek Haley
Department of Population Medicine, OVC
University of Guelph
Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
The Goal

- To teach dairy producers to systematically evaluate their cows before shipping
  - Provide a tool to engage producers and assess their current practices
- Encourage producers to make better decisions

http://anderscpa.com/protect-the-deductibility-of-charitable-contributions/
The Focus

• Health of Animal Regulations section XII encompasses regulations for the transportation of animals
  • Prevent the transport of injured, non-ambulatory or sick animals

• Despite these regulations, sick and/or injured animals are being transported and arriving at auction

Why Is This Important?

• Welfare concern for dairy cattle
  • Transportation can exacerbate the injury or illness

• Members of the public see these animals and may become concerned
  • Want to eliminate instances of frail animals from entering the auction

• Want to encourage good animal stewardship
Why Does This Problem Persist?

• In order to solve this problem, need to go back to where it originated…
  • The industry lacks a systematic effort to aid producers in making better decisions and prevent the shipping of sick/ injured cattle
  • Producers are uneasy about deciding when to ship cattle and when to not
  • Veterinarians want to be more involved

The Proposed Solution

Provide producers with a tool to systematically evaluate the cattle they wish to remove, with the support of their veterinarians.

To prevent the shipping of cattle, which are unfit for transport.
The Objectives

1. To address, and change, the underlying cause of the issue- to change the behaviour
2. To involve veterinarians more in the decisions and practices of their clients
3. Assess the technical utility of this proposed tool- does it work/ do producers find it helpful?
An Added Bonus

• We aim to prepare producers for the upcoming Animal Care program implemented by proAction

• Prepare them for the Required SOP for shipping cattle
Who Is Involved?

- Veterinarians and dairy producers
- Dairy cows
- OMAFRA - as one of the regulators at auction
- UoG researchers
Overview of the Project

- **Pre-survey**
  - Gauge the knowledge of dairy producers and veterinarians regarding culling/shipping and assess their current attitudes

- **Evaluation form - the tool**
  - Get producers to use a formal evaluation process

- **Post-survey**
  - Assess if producer's and veterinarian's knowledge and attitudes have changed
Methods

- Twenty two veterinarian participants will enroll 10 dairy producers each
- Veterinary packages will be sent out along with producer packages
- Producer packages include
  - Pre-survey
  - 10 evaluation forms
  - Scoring key for lameness and BCS
The Evaluation Form

Cow Evaluation Form: Please complete one form for each cow evaluated

Date of evaluation: (dd/mm/yy) ___/___/___ Cow ID (Name/Number): ____________
Evaluation done by: ____________________________ Last 4 digits in NUD number: ____________

Consider these questions before shipping the cow:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure and record:</th>
<th>Compare your findings to requirements for transports:</th>
<th>This cow is ok: (Only “yes” circles are checked)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Is her body temperature normal?</td>
<td>Body Temp _____ °C or °F</td>
<td>Is the body temp. 37.9 – 39.4 °C? (100.2 – 102.9 °F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Is she too thin?</td>
<td>Body Condition Score: _______ (see chart to score)</td>
<td>Is the score 2 or higher out of 5?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Is she lame?</td>
<td>Lameness Score: _______ (see chart to score)</td>
<td>Is the score 0 (none) or 1 out of 5?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Has she been dried off?</td>
<td>Last milking: (dd/mm/yy) <em><strong>/</strong></em>/___</td>
<td>Is the withholding time for meat and milk completed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Are drug residues possible?</td>
<td>Last treated: (dd/mm/yy) <em><strong>/</strong></em>/___</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Could mastitis be here?</td>
<td>CMT: RF ____ RH ____ LF ____ LH ____</td>
<td>Is no or only mild mastitis present? (no ulcer swelling or hardness)?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Circle any problems:

- Sunken eyes
- Twisted stomack
- Nasal (nose) discharge
- Discharge from vulva
- Diarrhea
- Swellings/lumps
- Abscesses
- Surgery sites

Are visible problems acceptable for sale? (check with your vet if unsure): YES ☐ NO ☐

Date cow left the farm: ____________________________

Destination of cow:
- ☐ Direct to local slaughter from the farm (provincial plant)
- ☐ Direct to local slaughter from the farm (federal plant)
- ☐ Sales barn, name: ____________________________
- ☐ Other: ____________________________

Other comments: ____________________________
Methods cont’d

- Producers fill out a pre-survey, prior to training
- Veterinarians will train producer to use the evaluation form
- Producers fill out an evaluation form each time they cull until April 30\(^{th}\) 2017
  - Only milking cows
- Complete post-survey after study period
The Benefits

• Welfare issue is being recognized
• Involve veterinarians
  • Better working relationship
• Address the unease producers feel about which cows can be transported
  • Gain knowledge and confidence
• Producers can capture cow information as she leaves the farm
• Prepare for proAction
How Does This Impact Rural Policy?

• Brings the existing policy to light

• Encourages producers to familiarize themselves, with the assistance of their veterinarian, on the regulatory policy on shipping cows
Key Points

• Cull cows, unfit for transport, are arriving at auction market
  • Welfare concern, industry concern
• By providing a formal evaluation method to aid producers, we hope to encourage them to make better decisions
• Aim to change the behaviour and assess the merit of this evaluation system
• Want to get veterinarians more involved
• Finally, prepare producers for the upcoming changes with proAction
Thank you!

- University of Guelph
  - Advisors and co-authors
- OMAFRA- HQP program