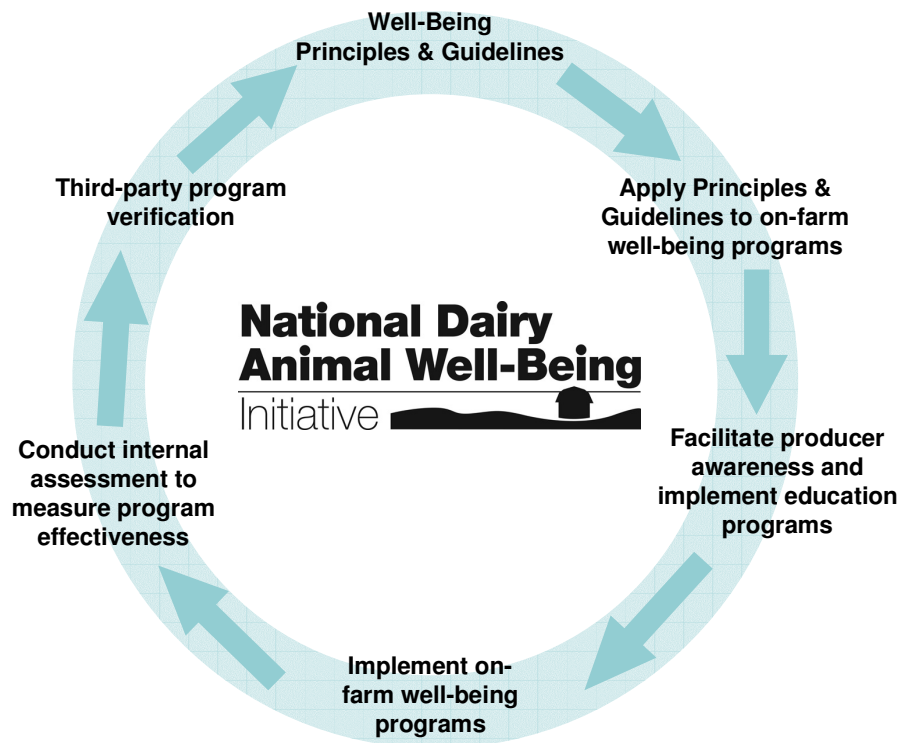


National Dairy Animal Well-Being Initiative Continuous Improvement Cycle



Principles & Guidelines

The Principles and Guidelines were developed by a coalition of dairy industry stakeholders including: producers, processors, animal scientists, educators, food companies and allied industry. Their intimate knowledge of the industry as well as diverse experience allowed them to develop Principles and Guidelines that would take into account all facets of dairy production. The Principles and Guidelines cover nutrition, animal health, management, housing and facilities, and handling, movement and transportation. The Initiative is NOT another on-farm animal well-being program but rather a uniform umbrella of Principles and Guidelines that help assure program consistency across the country. Participating in an on-farm animal well-being program consistent with the Principles and Guidelines helps demonstrate the dairy industry's commitment to provide for animal well-being.

Applying the Principles & Guidelines to on-farm well-being programs

Producers, co-ops and other milk marketers are encouraged to develop and implement on-farm well-being programs consistent with the Principles and Guidelines. Existing programs are encouraged to review the Principles and Guidelines to assure alignment. On-farm well-being programs can help build trust and confidence in dairy animal well-being by making sure the best management practices implemented on the farm are consistent with the Principles and Guidelines.

Facilitate producer awareness and implement education programs

Producer awareness and education are critical to the success of any on-farm program. Good communication, education and training will facilitate effective on-farm implementation of any well-being program and the related best management practices. Short cutting the education and training process can lead to problems in implementation and ultimately reduce program effectiveness.

Implement on-farm programs

Once producers understand how the on-farm program works, they can begin incorporating any new or modified best management practices. Program implementation is where the on-farm commitment to well-being is put into practice. Providing support and guidance during implementation can help producers effectively implement on-farm programs.

Conduct internal assessment to measure program effectiveness

Assessment of performance against program best management practices is an opportunity for additional education and improvement. Internal assessment can be conducted by a co-op service representative, veterinarian or other qualified program partner. Assessments are done in partnership with producers to help evaluate the current level of animal well-being and the implementation of best management practices. Any corrective measures indicated by the assessment should be implemented in a timely manner and followed up by documentation or a follow-up assessment. This internal review will increase the success rate of third party program verification.

Third-party program verification review

All on-farm dairy animal well-being programs should include third party verification to demonstrate program effectiveness. There are a variety of ways to verify program effectiveness. Some programs may choose to audit a statistical sample of farms to achieve a high confidence level that the program has been effectively implemented across all farms in the system. Others may choose to audit every farm on a rotating schedule. Whatever method is chosen, it is important to remember that the goal of program verification is NOT to find farms that are out of compliance. The goal of verification is to confirm program effectiveness. The verification process should be conducted by an individual or entity with no financial interest in the dairy or in the outcome of the program verification process. The verification process should include additional education and assessment in the event individual farms need to improve performance.