Teaching Final-Year Veterinary Students about Dairy Cattle Welfare

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Introduction:
Veterinary curriculum mapping at the Ontario Veterinary College identified gaps in dairy cattle welfare training for students. Through a partnership with the Campbell Centre for the Study of Animal Welfare & the dairy processor Saputo Inc., a 1-week elective rotation was developed. The University of Guelph is the first to offer dairy cattle welfare training of this kind to Doctor of Veterinary Medicine students.

Student training objectives:
1. Recall existing dairy welfare standards & recognize deficits
2. Carry out practical on-farm dairy cattle welfare assessments
3. Communicate with clients & colleagues about animal welfare

Outcomes:
- Provide animal welfare education specific to dairy cattle
- Refine dairy welfare skills for entry-level veterinarians
  - Identification & prioritization of key dairy welfare issue
  - On-farm assessments (animal-, management-, & facility-based)
  - Producer communication (report writing & oral presentation)
  - Recall existing welfare standards (Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Dairy Cattle & Canada’s proAction®)
- Offer a safe space for students to develop & share their thoughts about animal welfare within the dairy industry

“...I am so glad I chose this rotation & I feel that these 5 days really helped broaden my knowledge & awareness of so much more than I had expected/hoped for & has given me a lot to think about, & I really appreciate that...” ~ Student, 2018