



THE DAIRY CULTURE COACH

Helping You Manage Your Multicultural Team for Success



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Communicate Goals to Motivate Employees

As a farm owner or manager, you care deeply about the treatment your cows receive. You also care about things like efficiency, production and profit. A dairy farm is after all a business, and needs to be run like one. But do you ever wonder if your employees understand those things? It's probably fair to say that the majority of Hispanic employees on your dairy (or perhaps employees in general) have never managed their own business, much less a

dairy farm. So things that come as second nature to you, like parlor efficiency or strict adherence to protocols, might not seem so important to your employees. Here are some tools you can use to motivate your team.

I. Protocols. In order to create buy-in and show your employees just how important it is to follow job protocols, start with creating clear protocols and ensuring that every employee is taught

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A whiteboard is an excellent way to share goals and achievements with your employees. Source: Libby Eiholzer

Winter Vocabulary

Snow - Nieve

Ice - Hielo

Clouds - Nubes

It's cold out - Hace frio

It's windy - Hace viento

to Freeze - Congelar

Slippery - Resbaloso

Shovel - la Pala

Hat - la Gorra

Gloves - los Guantes



the same way. A good way to avoid protocol drift is to write them down and display them in the area where the employees are doing the job, so they can refer to them when they need a refresher or are teaching new employees. This may be in the parlor, milk house, calf barn or freestall barn. Laminate the pages or insert them in a plastic page protector to ensure that they stay legible in wet environments. It's especially important to include both English and Spanish text along with photos or illustrations to make sure that everyone can follow the protocol.

2. Training. Implementing a consistent training program can go a long way towards ensuring that all of your employees are taught to do things the right way in the first place. If you are not conducting the training yourself, put it into the hands of a trustworthy employee and check in with him every once and a while to ensure that he continues to train new employees the same way. This can help to avoid protocol drift.

It is also important to make it clear when an employee starts who will be giving him directions for daily tasks. Tell the employee who will conduct their initial training and who they are to report to. Many times an employee will say "You're not my boss, I don't have to listen to you," when another employee tries to give them instructions, especially when that employee is younger. Culturally, Hispanics will defer to their elders. If a younger employee is in a position of telling older employees what to do, he will probably need some backup from you in order to be taken seriously.

3. Goals. So how do your employees know if they are meeting with your expectations? Share with them some of your goals for the farm that they can impact, such as somatic cell count, mastitis incidences, pounds of milk per cow, etc. For employees working outside of the milking parlor, consider sharing goals that relate directly

to their work, such as calf DOA rate or conception rate.

Start out by explaining to them what the number means and how their job can directly affect it. But don't stop there. Post updates at least once a month and have regular meetings to discuss performance. When employees are empowered, they can provide some valuable insight into day-to-day happenings on the farm.

4. Rewards. Managers are pretty divided as far as financial rewards go. Some say that they expect their employees to do a good job and pay them accordingly.

Others find financial rewards to be a fruitful way of motivating employees. The classic example would be a milk bonus that changes depending on the milk quality bonus that the farm receives monthly from the milk cooperative. But a financial bonus doesn't have to be ongoing. It could be used as a tool to encourage employees to focus on improving a specific area every once in a while. Other possible rewards that aren't directly financial could include throwing employees a pizza party or taking them to a sporting event if

Communicate to new employees right from the start so that they understand what your expectations are and who they are to receive instruction from. Source: Libby Eiholzer



they can reach a specific goal.

5. Feedback. While financial goals can prove to be a good motivator, don't forget the power of good old fashioned feedback. A pat on the back, a "Nice job!" (or rather a "¡Buen hecho!") can go a long way in letting your employees know that you are paying attention to their performance day-to-day and appreciate when they do a good job. Everyone likes knowing that they are an important part of the team!



Why Push Up Feed?

If cows can't reach their feed, then they can't eat it. That may seem pretty obvious, but how often do you push up TMR on your dairy? Cows naturally push feed out of reach while they are eating, leaving them without anything to eat. They also tend to sort the feed in front of them as they eat, eating the grain first and leaving the forage for later. If feed is not pushed up, the less aggressive cows end up with leftovers and do not eat a balanced ration.

The ration is formulated for the nutrition of the herd and your job is to assure that the ration is fed correctly in the bunk and eaten. Here are some suggestions to make sure this happens:

Consistency is key. Cows are animals of habit. Provide the most consistency possible, starting with the feed. This includes feeding a consistent ration at the same time every day.

Push up feed regularly. It's more likely that cows will return to the feed bunk to eat when feed is pushed up, so implement a program to ensure that this happens regularly. This is one of the easiest ways to increase DMI (dry matter intake). Good feed management means pushing up feed at least 5 times a day when cows are fed once a day.

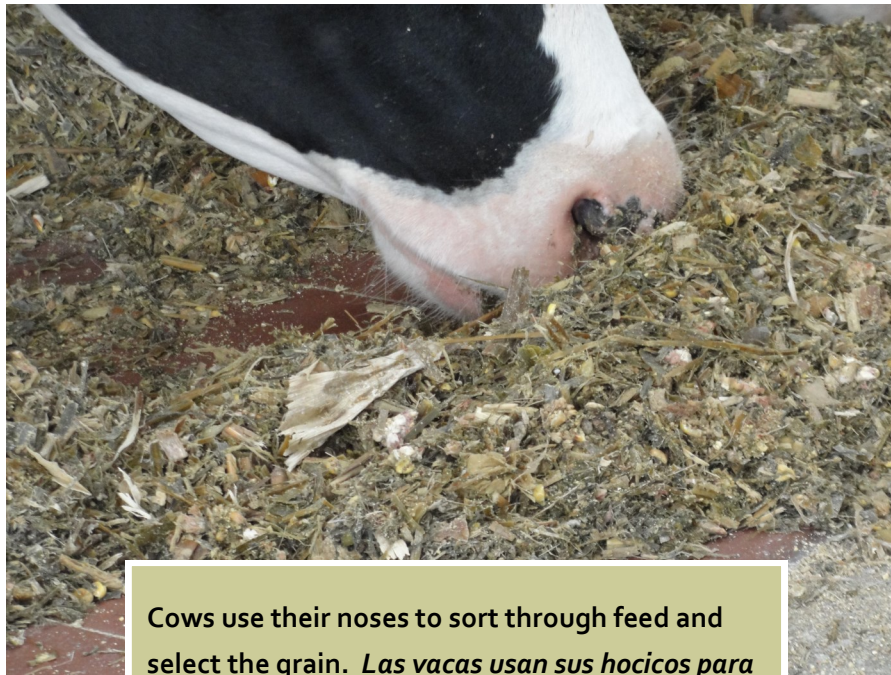
Keep it clean, dry and fresh. Maintain the quality of the ration to stimulate DMI. This means protecting it from sun, rain and any garbage. If the ration is fed on a very hot day, it will heat up and become unappetizing.

Si las vacas no pueden alcanzar su comida, no la pueden comer. Eso es muy claro, pero ¿cada cuánto empujan la comida en su rancho? Las vacas em-

¿Para Qué Empujar la Comida?

pujan la comida fuera de su alcance naturalmente cuando comen, dejándose sin comida. También tienden a elegir el grano y dejar el forraje. Si no empujan la comida, las vacas que son menos agresivas comen solamente lo que sobra y no comen una ración equilibrada.

La ración es formulada por la nutrición del hato y su trabajo es asegurarse que la ración correcta sea servida en el comedero y consumida. Aquí hay unas sugerencias para asegurarse que esto suceda:



Cows use their noses to sort through feed and select the grain. *Las vacas usan sus hocicos para elegir el grano de la ración.* Source: Libby Eiholzer

La consistencia cuenta. Las vacas son animales de hábito. Provea la mayor consistencia posible, comenzando por la ración. Esto incluye servir una ración constante diariamente a la misma hora.

Empuje regularmente el alimento. Es más probable que las vacas se vuelvan a acercar al comedero cuando

se empuja el alimento, así que implemente un programa

para asegurarse que esto se haga regularmente. Esta es una de las maneras más fáciles de estimular el CMS (Consumo de Materia Seca). El buen manejo de la comida incluye empujar la comida por lo menos 5 veces al día cuando alimentan las vacas una vez al día.

Manténgala limpia, seca y fresca. Mantenga la calidad de la ración para estimular el CMS. Esto significa protegerla del sol, la lluvia y cualquier basura. Si la ración se sirve en un día muy caluroso, la comida se calentará y no será nada apetitosa.

Source: <http://www.extension.umn.edu/agriculture/dairy/feed-and-nutrition/TMR-feeding-presentation.pdf>



Poinsettias, *la Flor de Noche Buena*

Have you ever stopped to consider why Poinsettias are such a popular flower at Christmas time?

The poinsettia is a plant native to Mexico and Guatemala that was called “*Cuetlaxochitl*” by the Aztecs. It was first brought to the U.S. in 1828 by Joel Roberts Poinsett who was serving as the first U.S. Ambassador to Mexico. Poinsett sent cuttings back to his home in South Carolina. Paul Ecke Jr. of California developed a technique to create branching in poinsettia seedlings, resulting in a fuller plant. The market for potted poinsettias grew rapidly after this.

In Mexico and Guatemala, the poinsettia is more of a

tree than a potted plant- it is a perennial that can grow up to 10-15 feet tall! In these countries the flower is called “*Flor de Noche Buena*,” or the flower of Christmas

Eve. A Mexican legend tells the story of a young girl who had no gift to offer the baby Jesus on Christmas Eve other than some weeds. When she brought the weeds into the church, they blossomed and were transformed into beautiful red poinsettias.



A Poinsettia grows in a garden in Guatemala.
Source: Libby Eiholzer

December 12th is known as Poinsettia Day, in honor of the death of Joel Roberts Poinsett in 1851. It is also *Día de la Virgen* in Mexico, where the poinsettia is displayed to honor the Virgin Mary.

Source: <http://extension.illinois.edu/poinsettia/index.cfm>

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Stay tuned for the next issue of The Dairy Culture Coach in March!

Through educational programs and other teaching opportunities, the NWNY Team seeks to build producers' capacities to:

- Enhance the sustainability of their businesses
- Enhance profitability and other aspects of economic performance of their businesses
- Practice environmental stewardship
- Enhance employee well-being and satisfaction
- Provide safe, healthy agricultural products in ways that are safe to farm owners and employees and their families and neighbors
- Provide leadership for enhancing relationships between the agricultural sector and the general public

We look forward to working with you in your farming and ag-related ventures in NWNY. Together we can keep the agricultural economy competitive, maintain a comfortable standard of living and be conscientious stewards of our natural environment.

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