



# THE DAIRY CULTURE COACH

Helping You Manage Your Multicultural Team for Success



## Focus Group Report Executive Summary

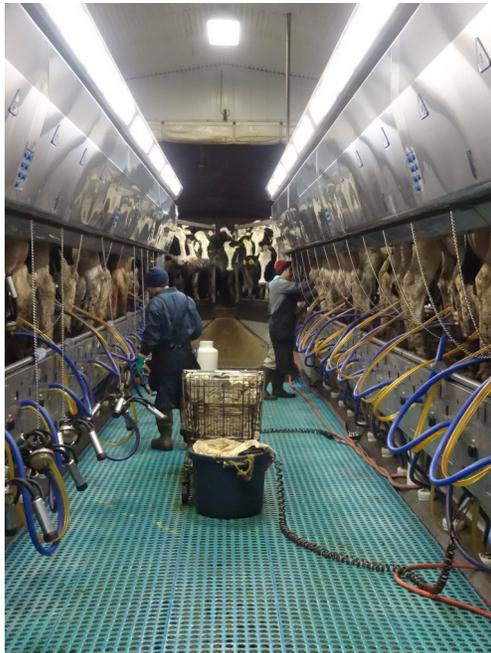
**W**hile dairy farmers in New York State are heavily reliant on Hispanic workers to fill increasingly skilled positions on the farm, they are currently facing a myriad of concerns regarding this workforce. This report is a summary of a focus group of 12 employers of Hispanic dairy workers that took place to discuss recruitment, retention and employment of these

Hispanic employees. The following is a review of the topics discussed.

**Recruitment:** Eleven out of the twelve participating employers said that while they currently are able to fill most job openings through referrals, they are concerned about finding qualified workers in the future. This is mostly due to competition from other employers and changes occurring through state and federal legislation.

**Wages and Benefits:** Employers think it is likely that overtime pay will eventually be required in New York State. They feel that they are currently offering competitive wages, but in the future may need to increase pay and offer more vacation time to stay competitive. Housing is a benefit currently offered but one that can be difficult to manage.

**Immigration:** While relatively few employees have been deported at this point, there is a feeling of fear amongst the Hispanic worker population regarding immigration enforcement. Employers would struggle greatly if they lost their employees through



workers. The participating farms had workforces made up of at least 50%

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### Kitchen Vocabulary

- to refrigerate—refrigerar
- the dishes— los trastes
- to wash—lavar
- to put away—guardar
- to sweep—barrer
- to mop—trapear
- crumbs—las migas
- water leak—fuga de agua
- ants—las hormigas
- cockroaches—las cucarachas



immigration enforcement or mandatory E-verify, and would have to look to other labor pools.

**Farm Worker Advocacy:** Participating farmers expressed concern regarding farm worker advocacy groups and a desire to see them move towards a more cooperative relationship with farm employers in order to truly help farm workers.

**Farm Employment and the Consumer:** Farmers already strive to be the best possible employers and do not feel that mandated guidelines for worker treatment will be created and enforced.

**Collective Bargaining:** These employers expect to see collective bargaining rights for farm workers within the next 10 years.

**Robotic Milking:** The continued adoption of technology will continue, including robotic milking systems. Due to the large capital investment required, the trend towards increased farm size will continue.

**Hispanic Culture:** Employers treat their Hispanic employees like all their other employees and make a special effort to understand their background and provide opportunities to enrich their lives while in the US.

**Labor Law Compliance:** While the Trump administration may make it easier for employers to comply with Federal labor laws, New York State laws continue to be tougher on employers than federal laws.

**Additional Thoughts:** Employers feel that they cannot advocate for their potentially undocumented workers without compromising their businesses, though they feel that it is extremely important for both their employees and their businesses.

This focus group was held just a few weeks after President Trump signed an Executive Order on immigration, which certainly brought immigration enforcement concerns to the forefront in agricultural communities. Despite this, the 12 farm employers had many other thoughts and concerns to discuss. Overall, the consensus was that there are many changes around the corner; we will eventually have a dairy farm workforce that is more skilled and includes fewer unauthorized immigrant workers.

To read the full report, “Workforce Issues and the New York Dairy Industry,” visit <https://dyson.cornell.edu/outreach/extension-bulletins/documents/Cornell-Dyson-eb1703.pdf>.

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## June Dairy Month– Dairy in Guatemala

**D**uring my time serving as a Peace Corps volunteer in Guatemala, I lived in a rural village at an elevation of 8,000 feet. While it was too high and too cold to grow coffee, I was delighted to find that dairy cows thrived in the climate! My host family had a small herd of dairy cows (about 8 cows that were a mix of Brown Swiss, Jersey, and Holstein). I got to milk the cows by hand with my host dad, and learned how Guatemalans incorporate dairy products into their meals from my host mom. While not all families are lucky enough to have fresh dairy readily available, it’s pretty common for a family that owns some land to keep a few cows.

Favorites in Guatemala include *queso fresco* (fresh farmer-

style cheese), *crema* (cream, poured liberally over black beans or fried plantains), *requesón* (similar to ricotta cheese, often folded into a hot tortilla). Milk is enjoyed hot over cornflakes (this took me a while to get used to) and in hot *arroz con leche* (a sweet, hot drink of milk and rice).

And *helado* (ice cream) is always enjoyed when the ice cream truck visits! Celebrate National Dairy Month by asking your employees their favorite ways to enjoy dairy!



*Queso fresco* pressed into molds



## Washing Milk Containers

**W**hile milk is critically important for calf health and growth, it can also become the enemy when you don't wash milk containers properly. This can lead to the buildup of biofilms, which are milk protein and fat particles that stick to the surface of the container. Bacteria feeds on these particles and cements itself to milk containers, creating an often invisible source of contamination for any milk that touches the container in the future. High bacteria loads in milk and colostrum can lead to scours and other problems in young calves.

How can you prevent the buildup of biofilms? Follow these key steps to ensure an effective wash:

- ⇒ **RINSE** using lukewarm water to remove visible milk. Hot water will cause the protein in the milk to stick to the container and cause biofilm development.
- ⇒ **WASH** using hot water (more than 120 degrees F) with detergent, bleach and a scrub brush.
- ⇒ **RINSE** using warm water with acid. Leaving the acid solution on the containers lowers the pH, thus making it very difficult for any residual bacteria to survive.
- ⇒ **DRY** the bottles, pails, etc. by leaving them where they can drain.

Written with reference to resources from <http://www.atticacows.com//resources/calf-facts-resource-library.php>. The following Fact Sheets can be found on the website:

- Biofilms Threaten Calf Health
- Bleach is Not Enough
- Washing Milk Containers: Protocol
- Washing Milk Containers: Checklist

## El Lavado de Contenedores de Leche

Aunque la leche es muy importante para la salud y el crecimiento de becerros, puede convertirse en el enemigo cuando los contenedores de leche no están bien lavados. Eso puede causar que la acumulación de *biofilms*, lo que son partículas de proteína y grasa de leche que se pegan al superficie del contenedor. La bacteria se alimenta con las partículas y se pega fuertemente a los contenedores de leche, lo que crea una fuente de contaminación para toda la leche que tocará el contenedor en el futuro. Altas niveles de bacteria en leche y calostro puede resultar en diarrea y otras problemas en becerros jóvenes.

¿Cómo puedes prevenir la acumulación de los *biofilms*? Sigue estos pasos claves para asegurar una lavada efectiva:

- ⇒ **ENJUAGE** usando agua tibia para remover la leche visible. Agua caliente causará que las proteínas en la leche peguen al contenedor y podría causar el desarrollo de un *biofilm*.
- ⇒ **LAVE** con agua caliente (más que 120 grados F) con detergente, cloro y un cepillo.
- ⇒ **ENJUAGUE** usando agua tibia y ácido. Dejar la solución de ácido en los contenedores bajará el pH, así que es muy difícil que la bacteria que queda pueda sobrevivir.
- ⇒ **SEQUE** los biberones, cubetas, etc. por dejarlos donde pueden escurrirse y secarse.

Escrito con referencia recursos de <http://www.atticacows.com//resources/calf-facts-resource-library.php>. Se puede encontrar las siguientes hojas en el sitio web:

- SPANISH: Lavando los Recipientes de la Leche (Protocol)
- SPANISH: Lavando los Recipientes de la Leche (Lista de Verificación)



## Why Refrigeration is Important

Bacteria is everywhere! It can cause food to spoil and make people sick. All perishable foods need to be refrigerated in order to prevent the growth of bacteria. These foods should be placed in the refrigerator within two hours, or within one hour when it is hot outside. Perishable foods include the following:

- Milk, cheese, yogurt, other dairy products
- Eggs
- Meats
- Vegetables & Fruits
- Condiments (mayonnaise, ketchup, etc.)
- Leftover cooked foods

Never leave raw meat on the counter to thaw. Instead, take it out of the freezer and put it in the fridge a day or two ahead of time. You can also thaw it in a bowl of cold water, in the microwave, or just cook it frozen (this will take about twice as long).

## Porqué es Importante la Refrigeración

¡La bacteria está en todas partes! Puede causar que la comida se pudre y que se enferme la gente. Todas las comidas perecederas tienen que estar refrigeradas para prevenir que crezca bacteria. Hay que guardar comidas perecederas en la refrigeradora entre dos horas, o dentro de una hora cuando hace calor. Comidas perecederas incluyen lo siguiente:

- Leche, queso, yogur, otros productos lácteos
- Huevos
- Carne
- Verduras y Frutas
- Condimentos (mayonesa, salsa dulce, etc.)
- Comida cocida que sobra

Nunca deje carne cruda en la mesa para descongelar. Sáquela del congelador uno o dos días antes. También puede descongelarla en un bote de agua fría, en la microondas, o simplemente cocinarla congelada (tomará casi dos veces el tiempo).

### **NWNY Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Team**

Serving Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Niagara, Orleans, Ontario, Seneca, Wayne, Wyoming and Yates Counties.

**Check out our website!**

**[www.nwnyteam.org](http://www.nwnyteam.org)**



Stay tuned for the next issue of The Dairy Culture Coach in September! To sign up, email Libby.

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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