National Dairy FARM Program Update
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I recently (virtually) attended the National Dairy FARM Program Annual Evaluators Conference, and I wanted to provide an update on the program.

While each cooperative can decide how they want to proceed, as of the end of July, the FARM Program is still recommending that member coops continue the pause on all on-farm activities related to the FARM Program due to the risks of COVID-19 (ie: no on-farm evaluations for Version 4.0 and no on-farm check-ups regarding Mandatory Corrective Action Plans or Continuous Improvement Plans). While your cooperative member may not currently be visiting your farm in person, that does not mean that the FARM Program itself is on hold. You still need to continue to meet Version 4.0 guidelines, or continue to work on meeting them.

Additionally, Version 4.0 of the Animal Care Program was launched in January 1, 2020, and was supposed to run until Dec 31, 2022, however it has now been extended until Dec 31, 2023. This means that the existing guidelines with Version 4.0 will be in effect for one more year, and some farms (the ones that had a Version 4.0 evaluation earlier this year) will end up having two Version 4.0 evaluations since farms need to be evaluated at least every 3 years.

As a reminder, Version 4.0 includes some changes from Version 3.0, including that in addition to your annually signed VCPR, you also need to have your herd veterinarian review your herd health plan annually. Additionally, all animals starting at day 3 of age have access to feed and water (that means water and some starter for 3-d old calves). Calves should also be disbudded by 8 weeks of age and pain management should be used. Further, Version 4.0 now contains continuing education requirements. All employees (including family members and owners) must complete annual continuing education in the following areas if they have responsibilities in these areas:
- Stockmanship
- Pre-weaned calf care
- Non-ambulatory animals
- Euthanasia
- Fitness for transport

If you have any questions or need help meeting the Version 4.0 requirements, please reach out to me, Lindsay Ferlito, at LC636@cornell.edu or 607-592-0290, and check out these resources:
- NCRAT newsletter article series from this spring
    https://ncrat.cce.cornell.edu/newsletter.php
- NCRAT YouTube videos
    https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCxb3fv12XdCA3GjuDsfkM3Q
- FARM Program webpage
    https://nationaldairyfarm.com/animal-care-training-resources/