FARM Workforce Development and Environmental Stewardship Programs
By Lindsay Ferlito

In addition to being a trained evaluator for the FARM Animal Care Program Version 4.0, I am also now trained in FARM Workforce Development Version 1.0, and FARM Environmental Stewardship Version 2.0. While the Animal Care Program is considered mandatory (99% of the nation's fluid milk is part of the program) and has improvement plans and action plans as part of the evaluation, both the Workforce Development and Environmental Stewardship Programs are still voluntary, and have no required action plans.

FARM Workforce Development
This module focuses on farm labor, human resources, and worker management and safety. The on-farm evaluation for this program is done through a questionnaire done with the producer. Questions are related to HR, on-boarding and employee handbooks, farm safety, and worker management. This program also provides producers with a variety of resources to help them implement best management practices on their farm (https://nationaldairyfarm.com/producer-resources/worker-safety-human-resources/).

FARM Environmental Stewardship
This module is designed to estimate greenhouse gas emissions and energy use on dairy farms. It is a questionnaire that asks the farmer several questions about environmental management and energy use on the farm to assess the farm's overall carbon and energy footprint. It is based off of a life cycle assessment (LCA) of fluid milk from the University of Arkansas, 2013.The program also offers producers several resources to help them identify areas of opportunity on their farm and ways to make improvements (https://nationaldairyfarm.com/producer-resources/environment/).

both Workforce Development and Environmental Stewardship are still voluntary at the national level, however some cooperatives have started to utilize them. If you are interested in having me conduct a mock evaluation on your farm or you have questions, please reach out to me (lc636@cornell.edu; 607-592-0290).