

DAIRY QUALITY ASSURANCE PROGRAMS

Frank Garry, DVM

Coordinator, Integrated Livestock Management - CSU

Where should we go with quality assurance?

An outline of some steps involved in applying HACCP concepts is provided in Dr. Elrod's article Can these principles really be applied to the dairy industry, and will they accrue benefits? Currently there are several initiatives underway to revise the ways we assure quality management, including those developed by Jim Cullor in California, Tom Fuhrman in Arizona, and the statewide Cattle Health Assurance Program in New York. Quality assurance implementation requires a management team approach.

Establishing quality assurance programs will require leadership. A set of guidelines and checkpoints will be useful, but not sufficient. Requirements for an effective program include education of producers and dairy personnel, strategy development based on analysis of farm processes, implementation, and then monitoring. Key elements in the process are education and development of standard operating procedures. The Integrated Livestock Management program at CSU will be working to provide some of these elements in each upcoming issue of the Colorado Dairy News.

Do we really need quality assurance programs?

Absolutely! Current developments in trade and public sentiment emphasize the need to implement quality assurance program in dairy production. Global trade markets shift some animal health and product quality concerns, while also increasing competition pressure. Changing societal perceptions emphasize concern about animal welfare, environmental issues, food purity, rationale for antibiotic use, and development of resistant bacterial strains. These factors will continue to demand responses from the livestock industries and quality assurance principles will provide the best framework for responding.