

REAL FACES of DAIRY



Share Your Story

Brought to you by a grant from Balchem.

Together, you walk hand in hand through every celebration, every trial. Your employees don't just work for you; they are your family. Consumers want to know that you care about your employees and are committed to providing a safe environment.

THE REAL FACES OF DAIRY

BALCHEM

You are the Real Face of Dairy, the original environmentalist, the first to implement sustainable practices and the most passionate about caring for your animals.

As Balchem celebrates 50 years in service to agriculture, we look to bring the tools you need to share your story with your community and those who want to know you and your farm. Let's work together to bring transparency and understanding.

Be a part of the Real Faces of Dairy celebration and a part of securing the future.

Visit www.realfacesofdairy.com and share your photos on Facebook, @RealFacesofDairy.

All photos were submitted through the Real Faces of Dairy Facebook page.

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Caring for Employees: Our Industry's No. 1 Priority

by Joann Pipkin

Gas from Manure Pit Kills Five on Dairy Farm.

The headline alone stops you in your tracks. It could be your farm. What if you lost five employees, five members of your work family?

The dairy industry is special. Operations are built around relationships, and employees become treasured members of each dairy's family. You assist with healthcare, food, housing and communication. You're committed to your employees because you sincerely care about their needs. After all, dairy is a 24-7-365 business. Together, you walk hand in hand through every celebration, every trial. Your employees don't just work for you; they are your family.

As we bring you the second pillar of the Real Faces of Dairy pledge, we invite you to share your commitment to a safe work environment. By doing so, you are stepping up to not only help protect yourself, your family and your employees, but also your farm's legacy. Taking the pledge proves that you care about people and you're committed to producing a wholesome dairy product for consumers.

The dairy industry prides itself on its people. We are one big family sharing a common bond in producing food for a growing world, and cultivating relationships with our employees is



an integral part of what we do. It's who we are.

Laying the foundation

New technology and an increasing farm size calls for added non-family labor. Couple that with an increasing need to assure consumers of food safety and safe working conditions for laborers and it becomes more imperative than ever for dairy producers to educate their employees on proper farm safety.

Number of fatalities among agricultural workers, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics



Fact of the matter is so much of everyday life on the dairy farm is dangerous. It is easy to lose sight of that amid the work and activities that are commonplace happenings. For generations, dairy-farm workers had on-the-job training from a very young age, so set training modules and how tos have never been necessary—until now.

Because your work family is your family, keeping them safe and caring for their well-being is imperative. The last thing you'd ever want is for one of your family members to end up a statistic.

Safety consultant and owner of CP Safety Consulting Chase Pagel conducts one-on-one dairy-farm audits to help producers step-up their employee training and education.

"I start out by just going in, having meetings, to see what (the producer) has in place, because I don't want to go out to recreate what everybody has," she says. "I don't want everybody to be the same cookie-cutter safety program. I want them to have a safety program that's unique to them and what fits their needs."

Pagel has first-hand experience in training dairy-farm employees after serving as the safety coordinator for her husband's family-owned dairy in Kewaunee, Wis., before going out on her own.



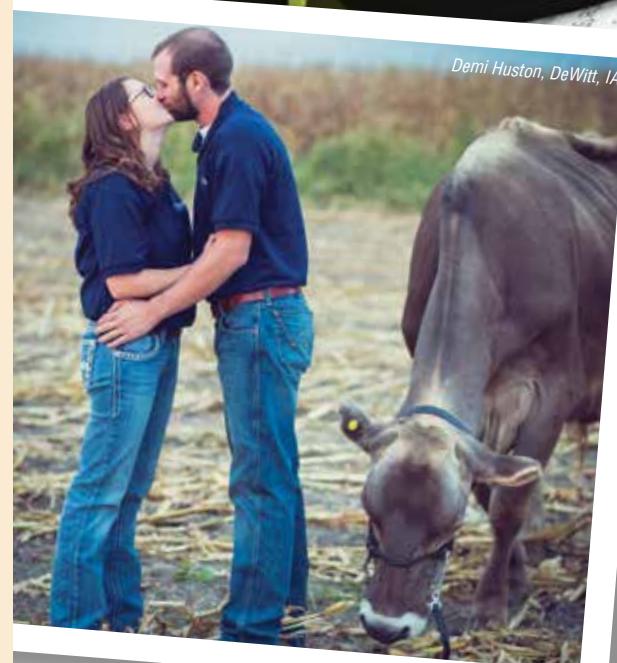
Teri Conant, Rudolph, VT



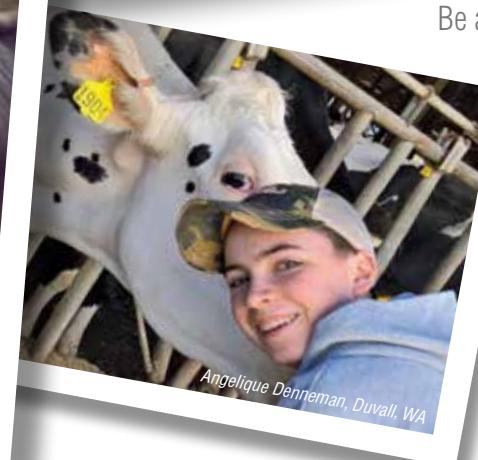
Catherine Baade, Elkader, IA



"When employees are part of the conversation, you get a lot more buy-in because they helped create that solution."
~ Chase Pagel, Kewaunee, WI



Demi Huston, DeWitt, IA



Angelique Denneman, Duvall, WA

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“To me, it doesn't matter if you're three, 10, or 110 employees, if you care about the people that work for you and they know that you care, then they're going to return the favor.”

– John Pagel, Pagel's Ponderosa



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See video featured on U.S. Farm Report at <http://bit.ly/RFODAnimalWelfare>



<https://www.instagram.com/therealfacesofdairy/>



<https://twitter.com/realfacesdairy>



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In 2012, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) began cracking down on Wisconsin farms. Pagel and four other dairy-industry representatives went to a training event on the new processes. From there, she was able to further enhance the employee training done at her family's dairy, which employs some 300 people throughout its dairy-related divisions.

Pagel often begins the safety conversation with hazard communication, which focuses on chemicals and the protective equipment necessary for handling them.

Dairy-farm chemical citations might involve improper post-dip and pre-dip procedures and failure to wear safety goggles and gloves as well as knowing how to read a safety data sheet that's connected with the chemical.

“(Workers) are not being trained on what chemicals they're working with and don't know where the safety data sheets are,” Pagel explains. “That's what's being written up.”

Making sure dairy-farm employees are trained in animal handling is also critical, she says.

Chase's father-in-law, John Pagel, knows that caring for and valuing his employees benefits his operation. Equipping employees with the proper tools to complete a task well not only helps them stay safe on the job but also means a better opportunity to produce a quality, safe product for consumers.

“Even though we're a large-scale operation, we still believe we're a family farm because we're family oriented,”

John Pagel says. “We believe in core values and working together and taking care of each other. It's worked well for us. We've got a great operation that everybody puts their heart and soul into as if it was their own.”

At Pagel's Ponderosa Dairy, which is owned by John and his children, employee education sessions are held to seek worker input. “Once you get people's opinions, they have a voice,” John says. “I believe that's important.”

The Pagels instituted the Communication, Accountability, Respect and Sustainability (CARS) program to create an atmosphere of expectations and understandings between them and their employees.



Safety videos are used alongside the CARS program, and personality profiling further helps the dairy's management team understand employees and their needs.

John explains, “How do they learn and how do they like to do things? Do they like to do things with their hands? Some might not, so we can put the right person in the right place doing the right job.”

Communication is imperative to employee management, John says.

Whether verbal or written by way of job descriptions, expectations and safety standards, he says helping his employees understand what their jobs all about and how to do it in a safe manner is imperative.

Embracing the need

Employee management and safety training can be a daunting task. Amid all the rules, regulations and meetings, where should you begin?

Sitting down and creating a plan is a good first step for dairy producers, Chase says. Outlining your plans helps avoid being overwhelmed by not knowing where to begin your safety protocol.

Some states are also putting together safety-training plans for dairies. Idaho, for example, is taking a proactive approach to dairy-farm safety. There, Dr. David Douphrate, assistant professor with the University of Texas School of Public Health in San Antonio and the Southwest Center for Occupational and Environmental Health, is working with the Idaho Dairymen's Association to help deliver safety trainings for the state's dairy farms

“A safety-management program goes beyond simply being in compliance with OSHA standards,” Douphrate says. “The basic tenets of any safety-management program includes:

- 1) Owner/manager commitment and worker involvement.
- 2) Worksite safety hazard assessment.
- 3) Safety hazard prevention and control.
- 4) Effective safety training for all workers.

With each industry standard having its own set of guidelines, Chase says the employer must understand the topic that the worker is being trained on. Then, following the training with documentation is a must. “Documentation is a huge part because if you do have an audit and it's not written down, it's pretty much looked at as if the training didn't happen.”



Making safety sense

As the dairy industry continues to rely more and more on hired labor, providing your employees with the necessary tools to produce that quality product is paramount.

“Workers need to be trained on how to do their job properly and how to do the job safely,” Douphrate says.

Providing a safe work environment protects your work family and

connects with consumers, especially those right in your home community. When your neighbors know your employees are safe, they know their food is safe.

“To me, it doesn't matter if you're three, 10, or 110 employees, if you care about the people that work for you and they know that you care, then they're going to return the favor back,” he says. “They'll work hard, or they'll take care of those animals or that equipment as if it was theirs because they know that you care about them.”



Resources for Training and Employee Safety:

dairycoach.com

- Employee management
- Dairy safety video
- And more

<http://nationaldairyfarm.com/employeetraining>

- Importance of training

<http://nationaldairyfarm.com/resource-library>

- Farm emergency contact posters
- Employee training resources
- And more



Take the Pledge

This year, the Real Faces of Dairy project wants YOU to step up and take the pledge. You can help your neighbors and friends understand how you make the five pillars a part of your everyday life on the dairy farm by sharing YOUR story. Next month, we'll discuss why transparency through being good stewards of the land matters to consumers. We'd love to see your photos and stories and hear from you. Go to our website for more information.

www.realfacesofdairy.com