

Dairy Producer Knowledge Of and Agreement with the Code of Practices Regarding Calf Management in the Province Of Alberta

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In Canada, the recently revised Dairy Code of Practice establishes requirements and recommendations for the care of both young and adult dairy cattle. The purpose of this study was to measure producer awareness of the codes, as well as to verify if the calf management procedures adopted on farms met the code's requirements and recommendations. A total of 83 Albertan dairy farms with at least 75 Holstein lactating cows housed in free stalls were assessed. Producers filled out a questionnaire on their knowledge of the Code of Practice, as well as a questionnaire describing their calf management practices. A subset of 15 questions from the calf management questionnaire was selected for the code agreement analysis. The majority of producers (73%) were aware of the code but only 53% of the producers have read it. On average, there was 46% compliance with the chosen code of practice management items. None of the farms were in accordance with all 15 items. Producers' practices showed high compliance in areas such as time of first colostrum feeding, amount of colostrum fed and routinely recorded information. Lower compliance occurred in areas of colostrum quality assessment, navel disinfection and amount of milk offered daily. 34% of the producers have made management changes as a result of the code.

The results demonstrate that code compliance is variable despite awareness being high and that producers are making changes to their practices based on code recommendations. Additional efforts in producer outreach are necessary to further encourage code compliance.