



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF  
FOOD & AGRICULTURE

A. G. Kawamura, Secretary

March 3, 2010

Jason E. Lombard, DVM, MS  
Dairy Specialist/Veterinary Epidemiologist  
National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS)  
USDA:APHIS:VS:CEAH  
2150 Centre Avenue, Bldg. B-2E7  
Fort Collins, CO 80526-8117

Dear Dr. Lombard:

On behalf of the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), I would like to express support for the "National Dairy Heifer Raiser Study" currently under development at the Centers for Epidemiology and Animal Health. This project is highly relevant to the overall mission of CDFA, which is the state regulatory agency dedicated to protecting California livestock from animal diseases, in order to maintain the viability of U.S. agriculture.

The dairy calf raising industry is a significant, growing, and largely uncharacterized segment of the dairy industry in California and the western states. There is great concern about the potential for rapid and widespread dissemination of a highly infectious and contagious disease within the dairy industry via the networks involving these calf rearing facilities. The lack of understanding of the epidemiological role which calf rearing facilities may play in future outbreaks of domestic and highly infectious diseases (i.e., foot and mouth disease), is a critical gap in our current knowledge. Improved information on the location and business practices of this industry segment will assist us in addressing both domestic (i.e., TB and Johnes diseases) as well as emergency and emerging disease issues involving this segment of the dairy industry.

Unlike other segments of the dairy industry, the dairy calf rearing industry has been a difficult industry to reach and regularly involve in emergency preparedness efforts. Just developing a better sense of the number and location of such facilities and obtaining the contact information for them will be a valuable outcome. The information obtained will also be valuable to inform the recently initiated national dairy continuity of business project, by



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helping to identify animal and other movements for consideration in the planning and prioritization process.

Thank you for your leadership in moving this effort forward at the national level. We are fully supportive of this effort and look forward to continuing to work with you on the administration of the surveys in California. Most importantly, we look forward to the enhanced understanding of the dynamics of the calf rearing industry in California and throughout the nation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard E. Breitmeyer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and "E".

Dr. Richard E. Breitmeyer  
State Veterinarian

cc: Dr. Annette Whiteford, Director, Animal Health and Food Safety Services, CDFA