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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:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the "National Dairy Heifer Raiser Study" questionnaire, which is currently under development at the Centers for Epidemiology and Animal Health. The dairy calf raising industry is a significant, growing and largely uncharacterized segment of the dairy industry in the western U.S. Improved information on the location and business practices of this segment of the dairy industry will help regulatory agencies in addressing both domestic (eg. TB and Johnes) as well as emergency and emerging disease issues. The information obtained through this survey will also be useful to animal disease modelers, allowing them to incorporate and better characterize the infectious disease dynamics of these facilities. Additionally, the data obtained will be valuable to inform the newly initiated National Dairy Continuity of Business Project, by helping to identify and characterize animal and other movements in this industry for considered in planning and risk analysis prioritization process.

Unlike other segments of the dairy industry, the dairy calf rearing industry has been more difficult for regulatory agencies to reach and communicate with regarding emergency response planning. Developing a better sense of the number and location of such facilities and obtaining contact information will be a valuable outcome.

Thank you for your leadership in moving this effort forward at the national level. I fully support this effort and look forward to the information which will be generated. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance in the administration of the survey in California.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Pam Hullinger".

Pam Hullinger, DVM, MPVM, DACVPM  
Associate Professor, Clinical Epidemiology