

ABSTRACT

The welfare of dairy cattle is of rising concern in North America. This thesis explores how stakeholders relevant to dairy production—including those working within but also those external to the industry—interpret issues around dairy cattle welfare, with the aim to unearth the root of disagreements and identify common values between diverse groups. Chapter 1 begins by exploring the relevant literature and identifies important gaps. Chapters 2 and 3 describe multi-cohort focus groups of farmers, veterinarians, and other industry stakeholders. Chapter 2 investigates their interpretations of the priority welfare issues facing the dairy industry and demonstrates that these stakeholders hold a broad conception of animal welfare with the potential to link to values in broader society. Chapter 3 explores how these stakeholders perceive challenges to welfare and their desired solutions for change; it shows stakeholder consensus for education, particularly in the form of peer-led extension strategies, to address low welfare knowledge among farmers and veterinarians. Chapter 4 describes a survey of non-farming citizens before and after touring a dairy farm and demonstrates that, as with industry stakeholders, citizens' animal welfare values are diverse. Chapter 4 also shows that citizens respond differently to learning more about dairy farming, with some becoming more concerned and others less so. Chapter 5 then describes the use of an online engagement tool to explore in greater depth what appears to be one of the most contentious practices in dairy production—that of early separation of the dairy calf from the cow. It illustrates that support of this practice varies markedly among stakeholder groups, but that people are often concerned with the same issues regardless of their stance, providing paths for compromise on practice and policy. Chapter 6 concludes with a summary of findings and recommendations, including: 1) farmers should engage with veterinarians and researchers to help them adopt practices in better alignment with societal values (such as pain mitigation), 2) industry decision makers should commit to transparency but also be prepared to listen and adapt to informed critiques, and 3) researchers should explore engagement strategies to aid in conflict resolution between industry and lay citizens.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Place of Birth: San Diego, USA
Academic Studies: MSc University of Maryland College Park, 2009
BSc Michigan State University, 2007

GRADUATE STUDIES

Field of Study: Applied Animal Biology (Animal Welfare)

GRADUATE AWARDS

Haynes Graduate Scholarship for the Advancement of Animal Welfare, 2012-2013
UBC Four Year Doctoral Fellowship, 2011-2015
UMD Research Assistantship, 2007-2009
UMD Animal and Avian Sciences Outstanding MS Student of the Year, 2009

PUBLICATIONS

- Weary, D.M., **B.A. Ventura**, and M.A.G von Keyserlingk. 2015. Societal views and animal welfare science: understanding why the modified cage may fail and other stories. *Animal*. Doi:10.1017/S175131115001160.
- Ventura, B.A.**, M.A.G. von Keyserlingk, and D.M. Weary. 2015. Animal welfare concerns and values of stakeholders within the dairy industry. *J. Agric. Environ. Ethics*. 28:109-126.
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- O'Connor, C.I., B.D. Nielsen, A.D. Woodward, H.S. Spooner, **B.A. Ventura**, and K.K. Turner. 2006. Mineral balance in horses fed two supplemental silicon sources. *J. Anim. Phys. Anim. Nutr.* 92:173-181.

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

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- Ventura, B.A., M.A.G. von Keyserlingk, and D.M. Weary. The welfare of dairy cattle: perspectives of industry stakeholders. In *The Ethics of Consumption: The citizen, the market and the law*. Eds. H. Röcklinsberg and P. Sandin. 11th Congress of the European Society for Agricultural and Food Ethics (Eursafe). p. 221-224. Uppsala, Sweden. Sept 2013. (Paper/oral)
- Ventura, B.A., M.A.G. von Keyserlingk, and D.M. Weary. Industry stakeholder views on dairy cattle welfare. ADSA/ASAS/CSAS Joint Annual Meeting. Indianapolis, USA. July 2013. (Abstract/oral presented by M. von Keyserlingk)
- Ventura, B.A., M.A.G. von Keyserlingk, C.A. Schuppli, and D.M. Weary. Web forums as a method for engagement on contentious issues in dairying: Should dairy calves be separated from the cow within the first few hours after birth? ADSA/ASAS/CSAS Joint Annual Meeting, p. 59. Phoenix, USA. July 2012. 3rd prize (Abstract/poster)
- Ventura, B.A., F. Sierwardt, and I. Estevez. Barrier perches and density effects in broilers. 44th Congress of the International Society for Applied Ethology. p. 162. Uppsala, Sweden. August 2010. (Abstract/poster)
- Ventura, B.A., F. Sierwardt, and I. Estevez. Barrier perches and density: effects on perching, leg condition and foot health in broilers. 8th European Symposium on Poultry Welfare. p. 67. Cervia, Italy. May 2009. (Abstract/poster)

SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE

Dr. David Fraser
Dr. Hannah Wittman



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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

PROGRAMME

The Final Oral Examination
For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
(Animal Science)

BETH VENTURA

MSc, Animal & Avian Sciences, University of Maryland College Park, 2009
BSc, Animal Science, Michigan State University, 2007

Thursday, September 24, 2015, 12:30pm
Room 350, MacMillan Building
Latecomers will not be admitted

“Understanding Industry and Lay Perspectives on Dairy Cattle Welfare”

EXAMINING COMMITTEE

Chair:

Dr. Caroline Rieger (Germanic Studies)

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. Daniel Weary, Research Supervisor (Applied Animal Biology)
Dr. Marina von Keyserlingk (Applied Animal Biology)

University Examiners:

Dr. Gwen Chapman (Human Nutrition)
Dr. Leslie Lavkulich (Resource Management and Environmental Studies)

External Examiner:

Dr. Candance C. Croney
Department of Animal Sciences
Purdue University
West Lafayette, Indiana
United States