

Multi-State Dairy Employee Management Workshops

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Summary and Implications

Developing and delivering workshops to support dairy owners' efforts to improve their employee management knowledge and skills is a priority of the multi-state I29 Dairy Extension Consortium. For two consecutive summers, the group obtained grant funds to deliver farm safety workshops directly on farm to dairy owners and employees throughout NW Iowa, SW Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota. In 2009, a NCRME grant made possible the delivery of Dairy Farm Safety Risks Overview (in English & Spanish) to 40 farms in the region, reaching 556 owner/managers and employees. In 2010, the Consortium collaborated with the High Plains Intermountain

Center for Agricultural Health and Safety (HICAHS, headquartered at Colorado State University) to sponsor additional training in health and safety. These workshops focused on informing owners about OSHA regulations and the owners' obligations to ensure worker health and safety on dairy farms. The 2010 workshops also included sessions on safe animal handling for dairy farm employees. Workshop participants in 2010 represented 35 dairies and 574 employees. Evaluation questionnaires and pre-post quizzes from both workshop projects indicated that participants gained knowledge and awareness about safety risk mitigation and about pertinent OSHA regulations, and follow-up on-farm observation and evaluation revealed that many owners made changes to in equipment and practices to improve general safety and employee well-being.