



Cornell University

Department of Animal Science

**Dairy Management Group**

272 Morrison Hall

Ithaca, New York 14853-4203

t. 607.255.4478

f. 607.255.1335

July 27, 2010

Re: Statement on ABC News Nightline story on animal abuse within the dairy industry

On January 26, 2010, ABC News Nightline aired an investigative report focused on animal abuse within the dairy industry. The report was based primarily upon an undercover video produced by a group called Mercy for Animals, which is outspoken with regard to its pursuit of a pro-vegan agenda. Obviously, this group wanted to portray the dairy industry in the worst possible light. With the help of ABC News and Nightline producers, they were able to gain a national platform for their agenda. We are disappointed that ABC News took the stories portrayed by this group and PETA at face value and as representative of the dairy industry, rather than trying to truly understand dairy farms and the activities that are involved in producing milk. There are ample opportunities to gain perspective and present a balanced view of dairy farming. Indeed, ABC did obtain footage of well-managed dairy operations, but elected not to present them because of "time constraints".

The vast majority of dairy farmers in New York and in other parts of the U.S. do a very conscientious job of cow care. They would not tolerate the behavior or actions of some of the individuals portrayed in the video. In reality, excellent animal care and welfare is the key to running a successful dairy farm and producing safe, high quality milk because healthy, well-cared for cows produce more milk. When animals have health issues, most farmers strive to get them back into production as quickly as possible.

Overall, we believe that dairy farmers do an excellent job of producing high quality and safe milk in a humane and responsible manner. We continue to do research and conduct educational programs in support of this effort and are proud to teach and support those who produce the food that feeds our state and country.

Thomas Overton, Ph.D

Michael Van Amburgh, Ph.D.

David Galton, Ph.D.

Larry Chase, Ph.D.

W. Ronald Butler, Ph.D.

Paula Ospina, DVM, MPH

Mary Smith, DVM, Ph.D.

Charles Guard, DVM, Ph.D.

Rodrigo Bicalho DVM, Ph.D.

Daryl Nydam, DVM, Ph.D.

These individuals are faculty and staff of Cornell University's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Department of Animal Science and the Cornell College of Veterinary Medicine, Ithaca, NY.