

Dairy Farmers of Ontario Research Investment Strategy 2010-2015 Executive Summary

Introduction

In the Fall of 2009, Dairy Farmers of Ontario (DFO), in consultation with representatives of dairy farmers and processors as well as service and allied organizations, research scientists and government officials, met to develop a strategy to guide the investment of DFO research and education funds over the next five years. The group represented a substantial cross section of the dairy industry in Ontario. Their collaborative input into the process of developing this strategy guarantees that it will have relevance to the majority of dairy industry stakeholders across the province.

Issues Identified

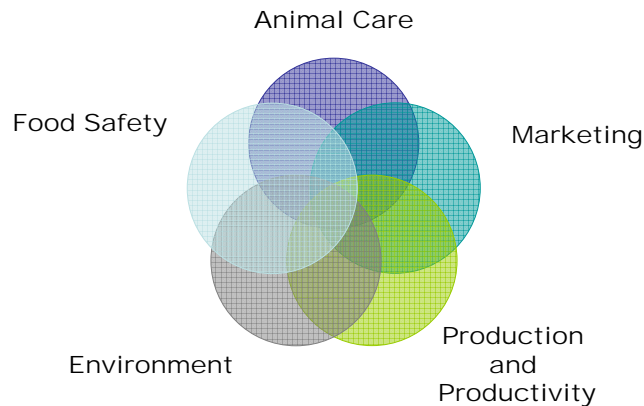
A significant number of global, national, regional and farm issues which impact the dairy industry at various points along the supply chain were elicited from the group. These issues were grouped into nineteen theme areas as shown below.

- 1) Climate/weather
- 2) Biosecurity
- 3) Food system security
- 4) Water
- 5) Food Safety
- 6) Urbanization
- 7) Changing Demographic
- 8) Government Regulations and Policies
- 9) Marketing
- 10) Novel Products
- 11) Energy
- 12) Environment
- 13) Animal Care and Welfare
- 14) National Unity
- 15) Production and Productivity
- 16) Genetics
- 17) Research Capacity
- 18) Policy
- 19) Trade

During the process it was recognized that there would be issues over which DFO could have little, or no control, or that did not fall within the scope of the funding which DFO allocates for research. Nevertheless, these issues are still important and are being considered further in other DFO Planning initiatives.

In considering the issues that fall within the research framework, it was realized that many could be encompassed within broader categories or overarching themes. As a result, the 19 issues above were further condensed into 5 overarching research themes as shown in the diagram below.

Overarching Research Themes



Broad research objectives for each of the 5 themes

1. Marketing

Grow markets for dairy products through, investment in market research needs, perceptions and opportunities, research into health and nutrition attributes of milk and milk products and research into the development of new, and/or the enhancement of existing, products and processes.

2. Food safety

Invest in proactive and comprehensive research that will help to position the dairy industry as a leader in food safety and thereby ensure that consumers have utmost confidence in the quality and safety of Canadian dairy products.

3. Environment

Invest in research that positions the Ontario dairy industry as a leader in the stewardship of the environment and will lead to the development of cost effective tools and technologies which promote water conservation, energy conservation and production, and environmental sustainability across the industry.

4. Production and Productivity

Invest in research to continuously improve efficiency in farm business management, use of resources (human, capital and land) and production practices and systems.

5. Animal Care

Invest in research to promote enhanced animal health and welfare.

Current Status of the Strategy

As of June 2010, the development of the strategy, including the establishment of priorities and finalizing action plans, is still very much a work in progress.

To all of those who have assisted in this process, Dairy Farmers of Ontario recognizes and greatly appreciates your significant contributions.

Updates on the further development of the strategy will be posted here as they occur.