

TALKING TO CONSUMERS

about animal well-being

Merck Animal Health is committed to improving the health and well-being of animals through innovative science-based solutions, products, treatments and services that help ensure a safe and affordable food supply. We share the position that animals should be raised free from hunger and thirst, discomfort, distress and pain, injury or disease. By developing industry leading approaches and innovative delivery systems, we help improve the comfort, care and well-being of all major livestock species.

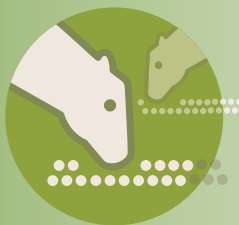
Animal care and well-being are top priorities



Farmers provide the best environments for their animals and constantly monitor their herds and flocks to look for any changes in behavior or signs of discomfort.⁵



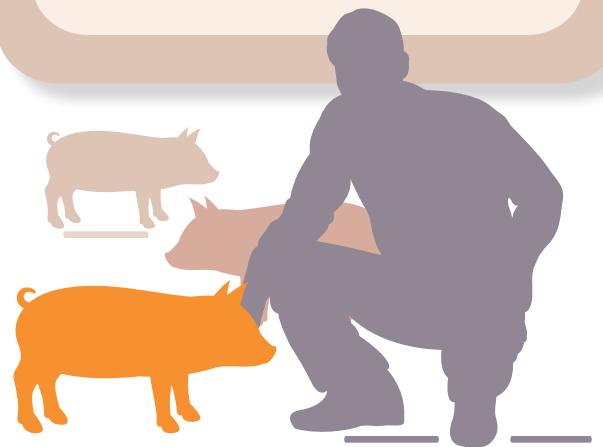
Farmers work with veterinarians to test for herd health and vaccinate against disease. This helps keep the animals healthy. At the first sign of illness, the veterinarian helps uncover the cause and bring the animal back to health.²



Farmers also work with animal nutritionists to make sure there is a perfect blend of vitamins and nutrients in the animals' feed, which is essential to proper growth at all stages of life.¹

Training and protocols ensure quality animal care and worker safety

- ✓ Farmers outline how they want workers to care for their animals through an animal care commitment. Protocols describe exactly how that care is to be delivered.
- ✓ Workers are trained on the protocols to ensure that animals are handled in a humane fashion.
- ✓ Farmers work with veterinarians and animal well-being experts to ensure any changes on the farm are in the best interest of the animals.



¹American Feed Industry Association. Enhancing Animal Nutrition Through Precise Technologies. <https://www.afia.org/issues/health-safety-the-environment/sustainability-in-the-animal-food-industry/improving-animal-nutrition/>. Accessed January 1, 2021.

²American Veterinary Medical Association. What is FSVM? Vets, farming and food. <https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/food-supply-veterinary-medicine/what-is-fsvm>. Accessed January 14, 2021.

³U.S. Department of Agriculture. Family & Small Farm Program. Family Farms. <https://nifa.usda.gov/family-farms>. Accessed January 2, 2021.

⁴Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Antibiotic/Antimicrobial Resistance. July 2020. <https://www.cdc.gov/drugresistance/index.html>. Accessed January 2, 2021.

⁵Dekalb County Farm Bureau. Farm & FoodTalk. Why are some animals raised indoors and other outdoors? https://growyoungminds.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Animal-Housing_1-17.pdf. Accessed January 14, 2021.

⁶United States Department of Agriculture. Food Safety and Inspection Service. Food Inspector. <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/careers/job-opportunities/career-profiles/food-inspector>. Accessed January 14, 2021.

⁷U.S. Food & Drug Administration. Inspections, Compliance, Enforcement, and Criminal Investigations. Dairy Product Manufacturers (4/95). Guide to Inspections of Dairy Product Manufacturers. November 2017. <https://www.fda.gov/inspections-compliance-enforcement-and-criminal-investigations/inspection-guides/dairy-product-manufacturers-495>. Accessed January 14, 2021.

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Consumers want to know more about how their food is grown and raised.

We know consumers have questions about animal well-being, and we want to help answer them.

We want to be transparent and help them understand how farmers care for their animals and work to keep them comfortable and healthy.

CONSUMER: Factory farms seem to have taken over family farms. That makes me worry about the care animals are receiving. What happened to family farms?

I understand why you might think that, and you might be surprised to know that 96 percent of all U.S. farms are family-owned.³ Many farms have expanded to support several generations of families. Rest assured that animal well-being — on any size farm — is an absolute top priority for farmers. Farmers' animals are their livelihood, and a healthy animal is a productive animal. They do everything they can to provide top-quality care 24/7.

CONSUMER: So, how are farmers specifically caring for their animals?

I want to help you understand how farmers provide the best care for their animals. Did you know that farmers check their herds daily? They know their animals, and by checking on them daily, they know when an animal is not acting the same and perhaps isn't feeling well. Just like you can tell when your children or pets aren't feeling the best, farmers can see signs in their animals, too. They work closely with their veterinarians who provide routine checkups and monitor herd health. When an animal does get sick, the veterinarian recommends the appropriate treatment to help the animal get well and prevent suffering and the spread of disease.⁴ You might also be surprised to know that farmers have herd nutritionists. A herd nutritionist is responsible for designing the perfect blend of feed ingredients to provide the right amount of nutrients and vitamins to ensure proper growth at all stages of the animal's life.

CONSUMER: I can't help but wonder if animals get sick because they are confined indoors all the time. Why are animals kept indoors in crowded conditions?

That's a good question and farmers work hard to ensure their animals are comfortable and healthy. Farmers and ranchers choose the housing that is best for their animals. Indoor housing protects animals from inclement weather, predators and diseases. An indoor environment also helps the farmer ensure that animals are receiving a proper, nutritious and balanced diet because farmers know exactly what and how much food they are providing each animal. Additionally, many barns today have highly technical ventilation systems and water misters that keep animals cool during the hot summer months. They also provide shelter and warmth in the winter.

CONSUMER: It seems to me that farmers are driven by profit. Is that true?

Farmers work to support their families, just like you. Like any business, in order to stay in business, profitability is key, but that's not the only goal. For farmers, farming is their business, and their animals are also their livelihood. They protect their animals to protect their assets, and at the end of the day, animal care and comfort is the farmer's top priority, because a healthy animal is a productive animal.⁵

CONSUMER: What about the undercover videos I see in the media?

I see those videos too, and like you, it upsets me and other farmers who are working hard to provide the best care for their animals. In every industry, there are a few bad actors, but that doesn't mean it's the norm. Farmers outline their animal care commitment — how they expect their animals to be treated and cared for along with standard operating procedures that outline exactly how that care is delivered. They also provide employee training, so those who work with the animals understand the proper procedures and protocols to ensure animal comfort and safety. Farmers are always researching evolving best practices as well.

CONSUMER: How do I know I'm feeding my family food from animals that are well-cared for and treated humanely?

I understand your concern. I feed my family the same food that I put on your dinner table and want food to be safe for my family, too. Food safety starts on the farm and farmers take this very seriously. They work closely with veterinarians and animal nutritionists to ensure animals are getting the nutrition and care they need. Additionally, the FDA and the USDA rigorously monitor meat, poultry and egg products.⁶ Meat and poultry for human consumption must pass inspection and monitoring by the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS).⁶ FSIS has more than 6,500 inspectors working in plants with meat, poultry and egg products and at ports-of-entry every day to prevent, detect and respond to food safety issues.⁶ Likewise, milk goes through checks and balances before it even leaves the farm and multiple times at bottling facilities.⁷

CONSUMER: Thanks for talking with me. I appreciate your answers.

My pleasure. We understand that transparency in food production is important to consumers like you, and I enjoy these conversations and the open dialogue. Animal well-being is our top priority.



The Science of Healthier Animals®