HOW SHOULD WE MILK A COW? LET THE COWS DECIDE!
Bridging Gaps in the Dairy Industry Through Medicine and Management

Washington, DC—October 4, 2018, for Immediate Release – Research on infectious disease and milk quality can impact management practices and influence the dynamics of the changing labor force in the dairy industry. This topic will be the subject of NCFAR’s seminar at a noon luncheon on Tuesday, October 9 in 1310 Longworth House Office Building. The presenter is Dr. R.J. Erskine, Michigan State University.

“The cows know best about milking protocols, but how do we translate what they’re telling us? How do we best use their insight?” says Erskine. “We should listen because the conversation leads to better milk quality, safety and sustainability.”

“This presentation provides an excellent example of the value of federally funded food and agricultural research, extension, and education in producing the scientific outcomes and outreach needed to meet 21st century challenges and opportunities,” says Andy LaVigne, President of the National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research (NCFAR).

Highlights: The U.S. dairy industry has undergone a rapid shift in demographics. Herd size is increasing as is the proportion of milk produced by large dairy farms. As a result, dairy farms are relying more on non-family labor and becoming increasingly diverse in terms of employment practices and organization. Many dairy managers have limited human resource knowledge and management experience, which often leads to frustration with protocol drift and a perceived lack of employee engagement. Taken together, these dynamics in the nation’s dairy farms are a form of cultural lag. That is, there is a gap between the human resource needs arising within the industry’s labor force and the capacity of producers and managers to address them. One of the simplest examples of how the disconnect between dairy producers and employees can affect the daily routine is the milking of cows. Improper milking can be detrimental to farm productivity, impair cow health, and decrease the amount of milk ‘in the pail’. Sometimes, it’s best to go back to basics and let cows themselves teach us how things should be done!

The seminar is open to the public and the media.

The National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research (NCFAR) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, consensus-based, and customer-led coalition that brings food, agriculture, nutrition, conservation, and natural resource stakeholders together with the food and agriculture research and Extension community, serving as a forum and a unified voice in support of sustaining and increasing public investment at the national level in food and agricultural research, Extension, and education. NCFAR’s Hill Seminar Series, now in its fourteenth year, regularly presents leading-edge researchers working to provide answers to pressing issues confronting the public and Congress. The Hill Seminar Series helps demonstrate the value of public investment in food and agricultural research—investment that returns 45 percent per year on average, and $20 in economic benefit from every $1 investment in food and ag research.

Go to http://www.ncfar.org/Hill_Seminar_Series.asp for more information about the seminar series and past topics. Interviews with NCFAR President Andy LaVigne are available by request. For additional information, go to www.ncfar.org; or contact Tom Van Arsdall, Executive Director, at tom@vanardsall.com or (703) 509-4746.