



Farm Management

Division of Extension

Creating a Dairy Farm Operating Plan

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Given all the uncertainty this year with the corona virus pandemic and COVID-19, it is more important than usual to have a clear and easily available farm operating plan. If COVID-19 strikes your family, you may be incapacitated or distracted and unable to complete critical farm operations, especially spring planting. The farm operating plan identifies people who are familiar with the farm to take over operations if you are unable to farm for a while and provides clarity on what needs to be done. Family, friends, and neighbors will also likely step up to help, but they will need to know what to do. That is the purpose of the farm operating plan – to help those who will want to help you when you need it. It will be one less thing to worry about during difficult times. If you need to help someone else, it will make it easier for you if they have a farm operating plan as a guide.

An [example template](#) is provided to help create a farm operating plan for a dairy farm. Make a few copies of your final plan and be sure they are easy to find. Share them with your back up operators so they can make sure your cows are milked and given proper care.

Be sure to have the name and address of the farm(s) located on the protocol so the worker(s) knows where to tell the business to show up if they are unfamiliar. Also **have instructions if vendors and helpers should or should not visit the house, barn, etc. without contacting first.**

OWNER & FARM(s) Name: _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____

FARM(s) ADDRESS: _____



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It is important to have phone numbers of businesses and people that your dairy utilizes for everyday questions or in the event of an emergency. Below are examples of businesses and people that are recommended to have their contact information:

BUSINESS	PHONE NUMBER	CONTACT PERSON NAME
Milk Plant Field Representative		
Veterinarian		
Nutritionist		
Feed Supplier		
Dairy Equipment Supplier		
Implement Dealer/Supplier		
Manure Hauler		
Market Animal Hauler		
Deceased Animal Hauler		
Genetics (A.I) Dealer		
Power Plant/Utility Company		
Electrician		
Plumber		
Employee		
Employee		
Neighbor		
Neighbor		
Relative		
Relative		

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If your dairy operation has other businesses that they utilize on a frequent basis make sure to add to this template.

Besides having the farm address and important phone numbers readily available for those who may be filling in during an illness, it is also a good idea to have written protocols in place for each aspect of your dairy. Here is a recommended list of protocols to have developed:

- Milkhouse and parlor set up/takedown
- A chart to in the milkhouse to identify proper milk cooling temperatures
- A list of cleaning agents and when/where to use them in the milkhouse/parlor
- Calf feeding and care
- Treatment protocol for common diseases
- Management of diseased or injured cattle
- Culling and transport
- Feed mixing for Dairy Cows and Heifers
- Manure Hauling
- Euthanasia

When writing a protocol for each aspect of your dairy operation think of the steps you go through when performing that task. Write each step down and then go back and make sure that it is understandable to a person that has never completed the task before. You may also reach out to your local agriculture extension agent or educator for help.

With the exception of milking protocols, plans for livestock farms will most likely look very similar. Livestock operations may want to provide further details on pen and pasture locations, and update periodically for seasonal tasks (birthing, weaning, anticipated marketing dates for finishing stock, etc.).