



National Training Program Teaches Humane Animal Husbandry

American Humane Certified launches a curriculum aimed at keeping livestock healthy.

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The lack of animal-husbandry training programs for animal handlers and managers led American Humane Certified to launch its humane training program. When raising livestock, hobby farmers who strive to keep up-to-date on best industry practices might be interested in American Human Certified's new humane training program.

To answer the food industry's call for better trained animal handlers, the program's curriculum—the initial development of which was first announced in March 2009—focuses on animal handling best practices and the science-based standards originated by American Humane Certified and its Scientific Advisory Committee.

The new training is available online and on-site. An important aspect of the program curriculum is the early recognition of behavior or health problems that could be detrimental to an individual animal or the entire flock or herd. It addresses animal-welfare issues and poor animal husbandry that are created by a lack of worker and handler knowledge.

Students enrolled in the program will be tested at the end of the training and will be retrained in any areas in which they exhibit a lack of thorough understanding. The program instructors are animal science professionals who will provide onsite demonstrations and guidance in appropriate handling and treatment, whether in the barn or in the field.

"A significant lack of knowledge of basic, good animal handling and husbandry practices, plus strong requests from the industry, prompted us to develop this very first, hands-on, independent program," says Tim Amlaw, director of American Humane Certified. "It answers the industry's need for education of existing and new employees so they can ensure proper and humane animal welfare and avoid potentially negative issues."

Amlaw notes that while there are other print or video training materials offered by industry trade organizations, there is no curriculum or program that offers basic hands-on humane handling, care or testing for animal handlers and managers by an animal welfare organization.

The program will be beta-tested at egg producer Radlo Farms in Maine, in both Radlo's certified cage-free operations and in its non-certified caged operations.

"Our educating of employees, growers and contractors who handle animals will complement and expand American Humane Certified's existing national program of auditing and certifying the humane handling of animals raised for food," Amlaw said. "For both large and small food producers, this training will illustrate a significant, socially responsible undertaking. Other users likely will include universities and government agencies dealing with agriculture."

Amlaw says that as people have migrated away from rural settings over the years, there have been fewer and fewer well-trained workers to handle and manage farm animals. The need for new employees continues to grow in the food production industry, and the need for training and development of experienced workers is key to the agricultural industry and is paramount for the welfare of farm animals.