The Dairy Business Association (DBA) has been working for four legislative sessions to try to provide immigrant workers, regardless of their status, with the ability to drive legally. Our work on this will continue in 2019. We want a bipartisan bill to increase our chances of success. The last three sessions there has been a bill to create a new driver’s permit for immigrants, but these have all been Democratic bills and the Legislature is controlled by Republicans. Our focus is on getting Republican lawmakers to help with this type of bill.

We understand that immigration reform is a sensitive subject for some legislators, but we have argued that this is not an immigration issue.

From our perspective, this is an economic development issue because it is important that all work-ers can get to their jobs. Also, it is a public safety issue because we want to make sure that everyone who drives on Wisconsin roads is properly trained and insured. These two arguments are meant to appeal to all lawmakers, regardless of party.

Luis Urbina Roque has worked for 14 years at Rosy-Lane Holsteins in Watertown, Wis.

What was your first job and now current job?
I started in the parlor and milked cows. Now, I seem to do a little bit of everything. One of my biggest responsibilities is overseeing all the hoof trimming on the farm. In addition to this I help to do a lot of maintenance in the parlor and in the barns.

How do you continue learning about dairy farming?
We have a lot of on-farm meetings. We learn from videos as well as hands-on learning. There are many times we have outside people come to train all staff to learn about different aspects of the farm.

What advice would offer someone who just started working on a farm?
It is important to understand what the protocols are on the dairy. When you understand them, make sure that is what you are doing 100 percent of the time. This is the best way to show you are responsible and you will gain the respect of your supervisor right away. This will help to have a successful future, no matter where you are!
New Year’s Resolution: Make the most of your job

By Frankie Rodriguez, Agri-Staff

For most of us, having a job is a necessity. While we all need a job, you can make this the best year yet by making the most out of your job.

Dairy farming requires long, hard hours, but that doesn’t mean you can’t take advantage of everything the industry has to offer.

Talk to your employer or manager about opportunities to learn more, like learning a new position or how to service equipment. You’re better off trying to move up and gain experience with one farm than to keep moving around to different farms.

Your employer will appreciate knowing that you care and want to learn, and it will make your job more interesting knowing why you do what you do. Learning is one of the best things you can do for yourself, both personally and professionally.

Tips for taking care of animals in the winter

By Elsie Gonzalez M.S., Motiva Consulting

People taking care of the animals work hard to make sure cows are healthy, comfortable and safe throughout the year, including during the winter when extreme conditions bring additional challenges. Some things to consider to avoid negative impacts on the animals are:

Water sources: Water sources should be checked throughout the day to make sure they are working properly and are not frozen.

Facilities: Make sure curtains and fans are working properly to allow proper air circulation. Ripped curtains, holes and nonfunctioning doors can cause air drafts and inadequate ventilation that may cause frostbites and increase the risk of respiratory problems.

Teats: Cracked and chapped teat ends increase the incidence of mastitis. Making sure cows are milked completely to avoid leaking and applying full coverage of the teats with an appropriate post-dip solution formulated for winter weather will help protect cows against mastitis and help heal damaged skin.

Young calves: Consistent feedings and keeping dry deep bedding at all times so calves can nestle will help keep them warm.

Feed: In the winter, cows need more energy to stay warm and meet their production requirements. Heifers also need to meet their nutritional requirements for growth. Cows cannot eat if they cannot reach the feed. Often feed pushing that allows 16-18 hours of access to feed is optimum to ensure cows receive all the nutrients they need.

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