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Member profile

Rafael Sandoval has worked for 10 years at Shiloh Dairy in Brillion, Wis.

What was your first job and now current job?

My first job in Wisconsin was a milker. I worked at a few different farms and had the opportunity to learn new skills. As I learned new skills, I was able to work my way through the different departments of the dairies, from milking cows, moving cows, maternity and then onto the health team as a herdsman.

How do you continue learning about dairy farming?

I continue learning about dairy farming by interacting with the veterinarians during herd checks. This gives me five hours every week of close interaction with professionals.

What advice would you offer someone who just started working?

My advice to anyone who starts working on a dairy farm is the same advice I give to every new employee at Shiloh — learn your job well, work hard with a good attitude and keep your head up for other opportunities that come along at the farm, even if this means coming in on your day off and shadowing the maternity worker or cow mover to make yourself more valuable!

Changes with new governor

One possible improvement is to get driver’s licenses for farmworkers

By John Holevoet, director of government affairs

In November, voters in Wisconsin elected a new Democratic governor named Tony Evers. This change means the people in charge of many state agencies will change too. This includes the agencies that regulate dairy farms, such as the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection.

We hope to have a good relationship with the new governor and his staff. We will work with him, his administration and the Legislature to help farms and those who work on farms.

For the past 10 years, DBA has worked to try to get a law passed so anyone who is properly trained to drive can get a driver’s license. We do not think a person’s citizenship should determine if he or she gets a license. The new governor also wants to work on this. We hope this will improve our chances of success.

While the governor is a Democrat, the Legislature is controlled by the other political party. This means there will be disagreements between the Legislature and governor. We hope to find middle ground on important issues.

About the DBA

The Dairy Business Association is an organization of Wisconsin dairy farmers, milk processors, vendors and business partners who make sure Wisconsin dairy farmers of all sizes have the support they need to thrive in the state’s economy, communities and food supply chain.

Photo credit Wisconsin.Gov
June is National Dairy Month or more commonly known as June Dairy Month. This is the perfect opportunity to promote Wisconsin dairy farming and food. Below is a list of dairy groups to follow on social media:

- Dairy Strong
dairystrong.org
- Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin
wisconsindairy.org
- Dairy Business Association
dairyforward.com
- Edge Dairy Farmer Cooperative
voiceofmilk.com

Share and like the content from other farmers and dairy businesses. Let’s share with everyone online how much we enjoy Wisconsin dairy.

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Resources

How to approach manager with a question

By Frankie Rodriguez, Agri-Staff

Make sure the question that you will be asking the manager is clear and precise. If the question is about a job you are doing, make sure you ask it before you do that job.

For example, if you have to change the hoses in the milking parlor but you don’t know how to do it, ask the manager before you change the hoses.

If it is a personal question, for example if you need to take an extra day off of work, then tell the manager that you have to talk to them when they have time.

It would not be a good idea to try to talk with the manager about a personal question when they are doing their job or doesn’t have time at that moment. If the question is urgent, for example if you have to report a mistreatment of a cow, you need to tell the manager that you have to talk to them privately and that it is urgent.

Communication is very important. Working on a dairy farm, there are many different types of questions. Always remember to be respectful of your manager’s time and to be clear and precise with your question.

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Stay cool in the heat

By Elsie Gonzalez M.S., Motiva Consulting

Guidelines for heat safety indicate that individuals performing strenuous activity are in danger of a heat-related illness when the temperature is at or greater than 86 degrees and the relative humidity is 90 percent. Since exposure to excessive heat cannot always be avoided, employees can take precautions to prevent heat stress:

- Wear light-colored, loose-fitting, breathable clothing such as cotton. Avoid non-breathing synthetic clothing
- Gradually build up to heavy work
- Schedule heavy work during the coolest parts of the day
- Take more breaks in extreme heat and humidity; take breaks in the shade or a cool area when possible
- Drink water frequently, enough that you never become thirsty (about one cup every 15-20 minutes)
- Avoid alcohol and drinks with large amounts of caffeine or sugar
- Be aware that protective clothing or personal protective equipment may increase the risk of heat stress

Be aware of serious heat-related illnesses signs such as hot, dry skin or profuse sweating, hallucinations, chills, throbbing headache, high body temperature, confusion/dizziness and slurred speech, which can lead to heat stroke.

When these signs are present, move the person to a cool shaded area, cool them by sponging or showering them with water and fan their body and call 911. Heat exhaustion, fainting, heat cramps and heat rash are among the less serious forms of heat-related illness. These conditions must be taken seriously, as they could rapidly progress to heat stroke.

Notify all heat-related issues and concerns to a supervisor. Taking precautions and being proactive will help keep you safe and healthy this summer.

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Other Wisconsin dairy facts:

- Average number of cows per dairy farm is 156
- 96 percent of Wisconsin dairy farms are family owned
- 47 percent of all specialty cheese made in the U.S. comes from Wisconsin