Industry Perspective on HMD Preparedness: Why Invest Now?

Charles Ahlem
Charles Ahlem Ranches
Founding Owner
Hilmar Cheese Company
Who is Hilmar Cheese Company?
Two Production Facilities
Processing Facilities

**Hilmar, California**
- 3 cheese plants
- 2 protein plants
- 2 lactose plants
- Water Recycled

**Dalhart, Texas**
- 2 cheese plants
- 2 protein plants
- 1 permeate plant
- Water Recycled
Milk Supply

- 240 family farms
- 57% High Solids Jersey & Mixed-Breed Jersey milk
What do we make?
Cheese Production

42 lb (20 Kg) Blocks – Domestic & Export

640 lb. (300 Kg) Blocks - Domestic
Uses of Whey Protein

Beverages

Protein Bars

Yogurt

Supplements
Uses of Lactose

Food, Spices & Confectionery

Infant Formula & Milk Powders
PROTEIN 40–50%
LACTOSE +95%

Global Reach
HOOF & Mouth Disease

• “Foot and mouth” confused with human “hand, foot and mouth”
• Only affects cloven-hoof animals
• Industry must change the name
  – Reduce public confusion between diseases
  – Focus that it is an animal only disease
  – Name tells consumers “I won’t get it, I don’t have a hoof
Charles Ahlem Ranch

- Policy on our farms, chain of command
- Site security – limited access
- Capacity to handle milk on the dairies
- Emergency protocol - ability to contact all employees at home or at work
- All animals electronically identified
- Would like to know if county would allow roads to be controlled in emergency
HMD Risk and Strategy

• Less likely to happen, major impact when it happens

• Focused Strategy
  – On-farm containment
  – Producer awareness
  – Producer actions
  – Hauler actions
HMD Preparedness Actions

- Communication System to immediately contact all producers and employees (One Call Now) – web based, sends VM, text and email. Tested annually, other uses.
- Biosecurity pre-planning so milk movement will more likely be permitted, other uses.
- HMD risk communication workshops, other uses
- Support for bulk tank sampling studies
- Developing a focused plan to work with haulers
- Involved in state, federal, and university Secure Milk Supply project – volunteered as pilot facility to write plan.
Why Invest Now?

• Long-term business implications
  – Impact on milk supply
  – Consumer confidence

• Prepared for HMD, means we are ready for anything

We must be ready to quickly contain and educate consumers.
What does industry expect from government?

- Strong communication between agencies and industry
- Government to quickly conduct testing
- Timely actions
- Government to grant companies with a Secure Milk Supply Plan access to move milk before others
HMD Vaccination

- Safety aspects clarified
- Public concern
- Export access
- Unified messages
We must all work together