

## Animal Care and Comfort

### Situation Overview:

- A. *Can you determine if cow comfort or care was limiting the productivity or profitability of your dairy operation?* No. According to Farmers Assuring Responsible Management (FARM) evaluation inspector from Land O' Lakes, our dairy meets or exceeds all program requirements. Cows were above average for cow comfort and cleanliness.
- B. *If you determined that cow comfort or care was a limiting factor, did you make structural and/or management changes to address the deficiencies? Please list structural and/or management changes.* While cow comfort was not a limiting factor, the incorporation of solid separation technology allowed us to use separated solids which has enhanced availability of bedding material. With a large quantity of available bedding material, it's allowed us to apply liberal amounts of bedding.
- We now have additional cows at a second facility that has mattresses, with solids on top of the mattresses for added comfort. As compared to chopped straw, our previous bedding material, we haven't noticed a measurable difference in cow comfort since using the separated solids.
- C. *What is your farm's approach to administration and documentation around the use of standard operating procedures (SOPs) for animal care?* We have one full-time employee. We keep a close eye and have verbal SOPs. While we do not have written SOPs, we have discussed it extensively, and hope to begin the process in the near future. We know there is real value in having written SOPs.
- D. *Have you enrolled in a formal animal care program? If so, what have you learned that's been beneficial to your operation?* Yes. FARM program through Land O' Lakes, our milk cooperative. We learned that we need to continue with our best management practices.