



Winter 2010 Newsletter



Executive Director Comments

“It’s About Time!”

Mike Simpson, Executive Director

Our Purpose/Mission... is to promote the humane treatment of animals through education and certification of animal auditors, as well as the review and certification of animal audit instruments, assessments and programs.

Yes, it is long overdue – regular communications to our certified auditors and auditors-in-training.

One of my goals last year was to start a regular quarterly electronic communication to our PAACO audiences. Obviously, this is one thing that didn’t get done but is now being initiated. One challenge that I struggled with last year was determining who the audience is for this type of communication. The PAACO board of directors helped clarify that and said it should be our certified auditors.

The struggle that I dealt with consisted of looking at the diverse walks of life our trainees and certified auditors come from – academia, foodservice and retail companies, producers/suppliers, etc. As I have pulled areas

together for this piece, I now realize that I was over-analyzing the audience. I see that regardless of backgrounds we are all tied together in the common interest of quality audits and auditing.

We have had contact in the past on an as-needed basis and I hope those opportunities to talk to you personally about your needs and what is going on with PAACO continue. Today there are about 300 of you out there who either certified since we began our activities/service in 2006 or who are actively seeking certification and doing shadowing from trainings in 2009. The value of trained auditors and understanding of welfare criteria has taken root in the animal industry.

Calendar

MARCH

25-26: American Meat Institute Animal Handling and Care Conference, Kansas City, MO

MAY

4-5: PAACO Meat Plant Welfare Auditor Training, Eastern Nebraska

11: CFI/PAACO Well-being Stakeholder Meeting, Kansas City, MO

18: PAACO Board of Directors Meeting, Manhattan, KS

19-21: Symposium on Beef Cattle Welfare, Manhattan, KS

SEPTEMBER

28-30: PAACO Poultry Welfare Auditor Training, Raleigh, NC

OCTOBER

26-27: PAACO Meat Plant Welfare Auditor Training

Quick Notes

Reminder: If you have participated in a shadow audit with an auditor trainee, please return the necessary paperwork to PAACO headquarters in a timely manner so that the trainee’s certification is not held up. Remember there are two forms here – the evaluation and the Trainee Code of Conduct.



PAACO was formed in 2004 when leaders of the founding organizations identified a need to promote and advance sound animal auditing through standards for auditors in education, training and experience.

PAACO'S Programs

Many of you are most familiar with PAACO as the group that does certified welfare auditor training. We do have additional services that help advance animal wellbeing that we would like to make you aware of.

Training

We are planning on holding spring and fall meat plant welfare auditor trainings in 2010. The spring one is

set for May 4-5 in eastern Nebraska and the class is full. Information on the training is posted on our website. In addition, sometime later in 2010 we will be holding a special training via webinar to update auditors on changes and additions to the AMI Meat Plant Welfare Audit instrument.

The poultry auditor welfare training is scheduled for Sept. 28-30 in Ra-

leigh, NC. This course will follow a similar format to past trainings but will include a couple of new instructors.

Audits

An area many of you may not be aware of is our certification of audit instruments. This service started a couple of years ago and to date only one audit has reached a quality point to be certified by us (Validus – Dairy Welfare). However, we expect the AMI Meat Plant Audit to be certified in March. The American Humane Association also has species audits being evaluated by our third-party peer review for a quality audit.

Once audits are initially certified, there is an annual process to keep the certification active by submitting revisions and additions for review.

Program Reviews

An area also related to our mission is that we were contracted by a dairy coalition group to review dairy industry welfare programs to be consistent with criteria that the dairy coalition established. We are active in this process as the National Milk Producers Federation has submitted their new FARM program to us for this service. Other regional dairy welfare programs have also inquired.

“I have heard of some meetings involving producers, suppliers and customers coming together on animal well-being. What’s up here?”

About 15 months ago, the Center for Food Integrity (see www.foodintegrity.org for background) and PAACO facilitated a dialog among primarily five major food service companies wanting to explore opportunities to advance animal well-being. There were two subsequent meetings of customer-type companies (food service and retail) that evolved in the first part of 2009 and confirmed an interest in working together and compatible values with suppliers/producers.

In mid-2009, an expanded group of customers and suppliers/producers met and agreed to collectively advance well-being. With their shared values being compatible, they agreed to continue to meet informally. As an example of shared values, here is a preliminary statement on well-being: “Everyone in the food system has a shared responsibility to assure the animals from which products are derived receive appropriate care that provides for their health and well-being. We commit to share information and work with stakeholders in the food system to assure animal well-being.”

Next steps are for all interested parties to gather to dialog by species topic as to where and how well-being can be advanced. They are focusing on how species programs are or can be structured to be credible, workable, affordable and have opportunities for cost savings.



Check out our web site:
www.animalauditor.org

Clarification of Auditors' Recertification Responsibilities

The one area I get the most calls from auditors about is regarding the continuing education (CE) responsibilities for recertification.

First of all, recertification is set up on calendar-year quarters coinciding with when you originally completed all training, including shadowing. Twelve contact hours of continuing education are required in the 12 months prior to the expiration of your certification.

We have a relatively liberal policy on the activities we accept to count towards the 12-hour requirement. They generally fall into these categories:

1. Auditing with another certified PAACO auditor – In this case, PAACO will accept a maximum of 4 hours of time spent with another PAACO certified auditor. Most frequently this is work that auditors do to collaborate and learn from each other's experiences. No matter how much time you spend in excess of 4 hours, only 4 can count toward the required 12-hour total of CE's. (Note: Your individual audit work does not count towards CE.)
2. Seminars, conferences, etc. – This is the core area from which your CE hours should come. The seminars/conferences, etc. must either be in the animal or

poultry husbandry area or auditing practices and procedures. The husbandry area does not have to be a strictly "welfare" subject. We recognize other husbandry areas (nutrition, disease, etc.) to be welfare-related. Distance learning or webinars are also included as well as in-person meetings.

In talking with most auditors, I find that they overlook a lot of activities they have been involved in over the past year. Therefore, it is recommended that you keep current the CE form that you submit annually. This could be valuable in documenting CE to your employer as well when evaluations are done.

Auditors with professional auditing companies and sometimes customer-type auditors seem to be challenged to meet or plan to meet this requirement. Since PAACO feels strongly that animal behavior and issues are important to be knowledgeable, those not frequently involved in this area need to recognize the requirement and get information about area or state conferences where the contact hours can be picked up.

Finally, the annual fee is \$125. I am frequently asked about payment form. We request a check for the payment unless you are from a country outside the United States.

How do I know who are certified PAACO auditors?

First, why do you ask? Many of you may have lost track of your status. Next, many suppliers and customers require certified auditors for quality and creditblity purposes. Finally, those in training need resources of currently certified auditors that can serve to supervise their shadow audits.

The easy answer is first to check out our website (www.animalauditor.org), where the listings of certified auditors (alphabetically by species certification) are updated approximately once a week. Also the expiration date of your certification is printed on the certificate you receive at certification and re-certification annually.