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NSERC Industrial Research Chair in Dairy Cattle Welfare
Drs. David Fraser, Marina von Keyserlingk and Dan Weary, University of British Columbia

DFC has been investing in the Industrial Research Chair in Dairy Cattle Welfare for 17 years. The Chair was renewed for another five years (2014-2019) with continued support from DFC (\$50,000/year) in addition to partner support from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), Alberta Milk, B.C. Dairy Foundation, CanWest DHI, the Cattle Industry Development Council, Intervet Canada, Novus International Inc., Valacta, Westgen and Zoetis. Led by UBC Professors David Fraser, Dan Weary and Marina von Keyserlingk, this dynamic, award-winning team of researchers has dedicated their careers to creating better dairy cattle welfare and behaviour management practices in Canada to the benefit of farm operations and their animals.

The proposed research falls under 5 main themes:

- 1) Dietary and management transitions of dairy cattle;
- 2) Access to pasture and alternative outdoor areas;
- 3) Re-imagining indoor housing for cattle;
- 4) Benchmarking disease and welfare on commercial farms; and,
- 5) Identifying simple outcome-based welfare measures for producer self-assessment.

The research outcomes of the IRC in Dairy Cattle Welfare will contribute to the creation of science-based standards for animal welfare and make important contributions to the growing focus on animal welfare assurance. The approach to animal welfare bench-marking being developed in the IRC provides a more stream-lined and feasible approach for animal welfare assessment, which seems likely to play a key role in the emerging animal welfare assurance programs being developed in Canada and internationally.