

A Day in the Life of a Large Animal Veterinary Technician

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Abstract

A veterinary technician can be an asset to a large animal practice. One benefit to having a large animal technician is that they can help a veterinarian to become more efficient throughout the day. The use of a technician allows the veterinarian to focus more of their time to the technical aspects of veterinary medicine. There are also many advantages to being a large animal technician, which include a variety of duties involving an outside work environment.

Résumé

Un technicien ou une technicienne vétérinaire peut être un atout majeur dans une clinique vétérinaire pour grands animaux. L'un des bénéfices à avoir un technicien vétérinaire spécialisé dans ce domaine, c'est qu'il peut aider le vétérinaire à être plus efficace tout au long de sa journée. Le recours à un technicien permet aussi au vétérinaire de consacrer plus de temps aux aspects techniques de la médecine vétérinaire. De son côté, le technicien ou la technicienne vétérinaire pour grands animaux peut trouver de nombreux avantages à ce métier, comme par exemple une variété de tâches à effectuer dans un environnement extérieur.

Use of Large Animal Veterinary Technicians – An Overview

Our large animal practice is located in Wooster, Ohio. The practice employs three full time Registered Veterinary Technicians who ride along on calls with the veterinarians daily. Their typical days start out with office work, which include stocking trucks, preparing surgery packs, and laboratory work. A few of the laboratory procedures that our technicians perform include mastitis culturing, bacteria counts, salmonella culturing, and fecal exams. With our technicians having the skills and abilities to perform these duties, it saves the clinic money by not having to use outside services.

Once the morning office work is finished, the next stop involves morning herd checks. Duties during herd

checks vary farm-to-farm depending on farm needs and owner preferences. Some of our farms will use our technicians to evaluate and treat the fresh and sick cows, while the veterinarian is palpating. At other farms, the technicians will vaccinate and dehorn calves. Most farms will include the technicians in the herd check by having them give hormone shots, vaccines, and placing CIDRs. Not only does having a technician help a veterinarian become more efficient, but clients as well.

The afternoons are typically filled with "sick cow" work. After arrival at the farm, the veterinarian examines the cow and comes up with a treatment plan. Having technicians that can work independently to treat a cow allows the veterinarian to discuss with the client matters regarding herd health, records, vaccination protocols, and last night's ball game. With the afternoons being filled up with "sick cow" work, we will usually find a cow that needs surgery. The technicians prepare the cow for surgery by clipping and scrubbing the surgical site, and treating the cow accordingly. The veterinarian will perform the surgery, while our technicians clean up and get ready for the next farm call. This is just another example of how a technician can assist the veterinarian during their day.

Driving time is spent filling out billing sheets, making phone calls to clients, and also organizing the veterinarian's schedule. Once calls are completed for the day any afternoon office time is spent organizing and cleaning the trucks, helping the office staff stock shelves, and catching up on any leftover morning work.

The average day for our technicians is about 8-10 hours, five days a week. Our technicians are paid an hourly with wages ranging from \$12- \$15 per hour. We also offer a benefit package that includes paid vacation time, health insurance, and 3% 401K contribution.

Conclusions

Overall, the use of technicians in the trucks not only benefits us as veterinarians, but our clients as well. They allow us as veterinarians, to be more efficient in our day by the use of their technical skills.