

The Art of Delivering Dairy Production Medicine

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Abstract

The art of delivering production medicine is often times as important as the science. Today's dairy farms are experiencing change, competition, and complexity which can result in frustration for both the farmer and the consultant. By improving our people skills in the areas of communications—both presenting and listening, cultivating the positive emotions—faith, hope, enthusiasm, and desire, and evaluating our personal qualities as well as the client's qualities we can truly bridge the gap between technology and the farm.

The art of delivering dairy production medicine is often times as important or even more important than the science we are trying to implement on the farm. The veterinarian / consultant serves as a bridge to deliver ideas, information, motivation and service to the farm.

Today, dairy farms and veterinarians are experiencing change, competition, and complexity at increasing rates resulting in frustration for both the producer and the consultant. By being aware of this situation we can better understand ourselves and our clients and be more productive and understanding.

Production agriculture is changing at a rate that none of us have previously experienced. It is human nature to view change with some degree of fear. Change can also be viewed as an opportunity. Rather than being viewed as “doers”, veterinarians are experiencing the opportunity to be providers of ideas, information, motivation, service, and supplies.

What is Production Medicine?

In my opinion, it is the application of scientific knowledge and experience to a group of animals and the transmuting of that information into profit for both the producer and the consultant. My purpose is to help the profession recognize the need for improved application of knowledge and experience that we already have.

Each individual has different levels of expertise in the different areas of dairy production medicine—repro-

duction, nutrition, quality milk, young stock, environment and housing, finance, equipment, and personnel motivation and management. The trend in the industry today is to focus resources towards all these areas rather than reproduction and sick animal work.

In order to successfully consult in the industry today, I feel there are certain personal qualities that the consultant must cultivate. Examples are:

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|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Positive mental attitude | Listener |
| Open Minded | Creative |
| Desire | Communicator |
| Knowledgeable | Humor |
| Organized | Computer literate |
| Meet & handle objections | Persistent |
| Gratitude | |

Just as important in any win-win relationship are the qualities of a potentially successful client. I offer the following as examples:

- Recognizes need for unbiased information
- Ability to accept and implement change
- Ability to make decisions
- Knowledge of present system
- Time & money required to implement change
- Desire to improve
- Urgency to make change
- Positive image of other's achievements
- Access to necessary supplies
- Ability to manage all aspects of farm
- Gratitude

Each veterinarian client relationship will have different personal qualities contributed by each party. The more positive qualities, the more likely the relationship will be profitable to both parties. The experiencing of personal growth as well as professional growth will truly allow us to bridge the gap between technology and the farm.