tioin is the so-called "water on the knee", or hygroma. I was always afraid to invade these. We dissected out an area about the size of an orange full of fluid. I merely opened it and tied it off deeply at the neck of origin, right at the joint, with #2 gut and stitched it back up. We put a wrap on it and I want to tell you about this because most people don't want to invade that area. I can say that I've done about 20 with absolutely no blowups, they just heal beautifully. We don't like to have them put them in sales but they certainly look better and it's something that you can do. Another condition that we see in 15% of the English breeds is the toe turning in. This is what prompted me to incorporate foot trimming into our practice. Another breeding unsoundness is a very straight leg. My tip is that if you are doing breeding evaluation you should incorporate foot trimming in your practice for it is a terrific practice builder. It blends in with your breeding soundness program. You do a better job and give better service to the pure breed industry.

Question: How do you operate your chute?

Answer: It is on a two horse motor and it is hydraulic. It just picks them right up and it is absolutely safe as far as protecting the operator. You can tie the 4 feet independently. The problem with most chutes is that they don't sit on the ground and this is real important if you get a heavy bull in there. We have two pivots that you unwind like you did with another chute to set it on solid ground so there's absolutely no rocking whatever. The bull can't tip it and he is not going to roll out of there. It works very well.

Question: Do you "block" the sole abscess?

Answer: We dig them until we get everything out and we'll pack them in cotton with iodine and then just put the block right over the top of it. I think the reason for our using blocks is that it puts the bull back into use, he'll go ahead and service cows.

Question: What about semen evaluation?

Answer: I have probably about 50 purebred herds that we take care of semen evaluation for breeding soundness. I don't like to use semen evaluation because, as I mentioned earlier, too much emphasis is put on the semen examination. The bull has got to be able to mount and get on the cow and breed her. This is probably one of the biggest problems in most of our pure-bred bulls but you can not tell the breeder that it is a hereditary trait, and that he shouldn't be doing it unless he is a good friend. He is not going to do anything about it anyway, so trim them. Start trimming them at an age because trimming really helps, I think. It has been estimated that 10 to 15% of these are hereditary, foot problems 10-12%, upper leg problems, 15%, but I have yet to be able to convince any of our pure-bred breeders to eliminate the bull. I can remember doing 20 interdigital fibromas out of one bull and he knows this and he should be out of the herd, but you can't get them to do that.

Use of a Technician in Dairy Practice:

Dr. G. A. Ledbetter, Davis, California

I am going to talk to you just briefly about the use of technical help in dairy practice. By technical help, I'm referring to non-veterinary lay help. Just to brief you on where our practice is, we are down in southern California, in one of the three main dairy areas of California, the Chino valley. What are the reasons for considering a technician? The reasons we consider it in our practice are that they can provide or increase laboratory capability, they can handle field tasks not requiring the veterinarian. They can fill in office personnel, and the bottom line is that they can increase veterinary efficiency. Let us consider field assistance. The first thing that comes to mind is assisting you in surgeries. I might add that of the four veterinary practices that are using animal health technicians in our area, all four of them are using females. It's nice when you are cleaning up or talking to the dairyman concerning post-operative care, the technician can be standing there administering fluids or whatever, again this is a time saver. Vaccinating and dehorning calves, we find that this is a big time saver here. In order to comply with the USDA I do all the tattooing myself, I feel that since I'm the one that is ultimately responsible, I think that's an important task, but while checking cows or whatever, the technician can have all the calves ready to go, vaccinated, dehorned, ear-tagged and everything and all I have to do is tattoo them. I also do a lot of calves at calf ranches. A lot of our dairymen at Chino send their calves out to be custom-raised. We vaccinate and dehorn about 500 calves a month and technical help is a big aid here. I mentioned that a technician can provide or increase your laboratory capabilities, in my practice we do monthly tank samples for all of my clients. Again, we collect our samples out of the top of the tank, we like to use a syringe. Sterile infusion pipettes are great if the milk is down too low and you can't reach it. I send the technician on a route. She has certain days each month that she goes around and visits all my herds, picks up all the samples, brings them back to the laboratory and processes them all herself. This way I know it's done on a given day every month. I do not have to rely on myself remembering to do it while I'm there. We provide somatic cell counts, bacteria counts, antibiotic tests, etc. We are fortunate to have veterinary reference laboratories close by, however you do have to fill out forms to make blood smears, etc. and she helps in this respect.

I said that a technician can handle field tasks, not requiring a veterinarian, probably the biggest area we use our technician in this is collecting milk samples if we happen to have a problem mastitis. There is no reason that I need to be there in the field so I send my technician out. To me it is important to maintain my health, when I was a veterinary student, I did this for 4 years, so I feel I paid my dues, I wouldn't ask her to do anything I have not done myself! A technician can fill in for office personnel, if your secretary has to go away, or whatever, you always have one extra person around the office area that can keep the ball rolling. This can be just cleaning up instruments, sterilizing instruments, doing records or running the computer. I feel that it is important that they have a good appearance and periodically she cleans all of our trucks and keeps things looking good. The bottom line is that a technician can increase veterinary efficiency. When vaccinating and dehorning calves in a chute, if I were by myself I could do in the neighborhood of 30 calves per hour, charging $2.50 per calf, this works out to about $75.00 per hour. I have no cost for technician time so I net $75 an hour. With a technician I can increase my efficiency by at least 5 calves an hour. I feel this is a very conservative estimate and it raises my gross to $87.50 per hour. It costs me $7.50 for technician time, I've netted $80 and increased my net to myself of $5

an hour. If I were going to do 100 calves, in a morning, alone, it would take, based on the figures that I just gave you, 3.3 hours but with a technician, I can cut this down by half an hour. If you're currently charging $50/hour that results in an additional savings of $25.00. That, I might mention, is an opportunity cost, and somebody asked me, "Well, you don't really realize that $25.00 unless you go out and take another call", but my answer was: "Well, it's extra free time for me and my free time is worth a lot more than that." On herd work, or your basic monthly herd check, or semi-monthly, however often you do it, I also use a technician here and I feel that on a three-hour herd check that it is impossible to save up to ½ hour using a technician. How do we do this? As I'm going down the line, the technician can read the numbers to the dairyman, she keeps him going, instead of him standing there waiting for me while I'm checking the cows. They're looking for the next one that needs to be checked. She administers all the vaccines and hormone shots or whatever needs to be given. The dairymen really like this and if I show up without her now, they are disappointed because they know that we are in for a little extra work. If we take a look at a typical 3-hour herd check at $50/hour that would be $150. Again no cost for technical help, I would net $150. With technical help, we reduce that by ½ hour, as I said, you will notice that instead of $50, I charge an extra $10 for having her along. Again, I said the dairymen don't object to this, they like it. They know that they're going to save time and the cows are going to be locked up less. We end up with a gross of $150. It has cost me $18.75 for 2½ hours of technical help. I've netted $131.25. You say, I lost some money, but again, that's where my opportunity costs come in. I have a net increase of $6.25 on that herd check. Again, the dairyman's cows have been locked up a ½ hour less. I've got an extra half hour to go sit down with him, go over records, or whatever.

One other way she can increase your efficiency, or he can increase your efficiency is driving to and from calls. Fortunately, our clients are pretty close together, but that kind of helps out once in a while. Salaries for technical help? It can be minimum wage to, I guess the sky's the limit, it all depends how much they're worth to you. It depends on their experience, education and any kind of special training that you've given them or that they had had in the past. Let's look at three different veterinarians, or veterinary practices in the Chino Valley, that are using technicians. Veterinarian A currently has 2 technicians, one's full time, one's part time, basic salary of $1300/month. Both are girls, they've both gone through AHT, or Animal Health Technician Training which is basically a 2-year curriculum. Veterinarian B doesn't pay his help quite as much, he gives them a little more vacation and Veterinarian C throws in a quarterly cost of living index. Their technician has a little bit more education, she's got a Bachelor of Science degree. I just threw this in to show you that how you pay them all depends on what they are worth to you. You can work out all different kinds of plans, just as if you were hiring a new graduate. To review the reasons for hiring — they can provide field assistance which as we all know is very helpful at times, they can provide or increase laboratory capabilities, which is another method of generating practice revenue as well as increasing the quality of your practice, they can handle field tasks not requiring a veterinarian. They can fill in for your office personnel, and again the bottom line is they increase your veterinary efficiency.

BULK TANK PROCEDURES

Dr. Andrew P. Johnson,
Seymour, Wisconsin

MATERIALS NEEDED

Whirlpack
Incubator 37°C
Tryptic Soy Blood Agar Plate*
Tellurite Glycine Agar*
TKT Agar Plate*
MacConkey Agar*
TB Syringe with 18 gauge needle
4 Sterile swabs
12cc syringe

PROCEDURE

Take milk sample from agitated bulk tank with sterile 12cc syringe and place in whirlpack. Refrigerate bulk tank sample until ready to test. Shake Whirlpack vigorously. Draw 0.5cc of milk into TB syringe. Put 0.1cc on each plate and spread over entire surface using a sterile swab for each plate. Incubate 24 hours and read the plates.

PLATE INTERPRETATION

Blood Agar—Count all colonies for general TOTAL bacteria count.
MacConkey—Count all pink and yellow colonies—Coliforms.
Tellurite Glycine—Count all black colonies—Staph Aureus.
TKT Agar—small colonies with clear hemolysis—Strep Ag.
small colonies with brown/green hemolysis—Strep Uberis.
small colonies with no hemolysis—Strep species.

It's quick, simple and reasonably accurate. It allows you to be able to check a problem herd and find out what you're up against in planning your attack. It also provides you a way to monitor your problem herds.

**Plates available from:*
Veterinary Concepts
201 McKay Avenue
Spring Valley, WI 54767
1—715-778-5928