

milking practices. It gives you the opportunity to get your foot in the door and to give them the information they need to know that you know that the need is there. Heifer drafting—I had at least a half a dozen veterinarians come up to me and say, “You know, I carry your little article about the heifer hustle around—it’s brought more dollars to my pocket and it’s really helped.” The thing is it assures you and the client of how good a job you are doing or it becomes a real eye opener. You can get paid as much to do that as you can to palpate a cow, but you probably do the farmer more good, because he’s probably losing more money with his young stock than he is with his reproduction program.

I walk into a farm and I plant my seeds and comment that maybe his heifers are not doing as well as they should. We do a few for free. It’s amazing how well that works when you do maybe one from each age group, put it on a graph, leave the graph with the farmer, and all of a sudden before the week is done he’s calling you, asking you questions like, “What could I do? What do you suggest?” But it’s amazing the type

of income it can build, but the key to it all is that you make that farmer successful and he sees results.

Always do a complete job. I think that is where we always fall down. You get a guy excited, you get him interested, and then forget to go back or you get him on a nutritional program and you are afraid to follow up. Always do a complete job. Stay with him from the beginning to the end and that makes him successful. Probably the most important thing of all is increased veterinary service increases profitability of both. If what you are going to do for him doesn’t make him a living, then something is wrong.

**I truly feel as a veterinary profession, we can move the industry more so than anybody else. We can be proud that we can have such a big impact on the agriculture of tomorrow.**

*Transcribed from a recording of Dr. Johnson’s presentation.*

## How I Motivate and Communicate with Clients in My Dairy Practice

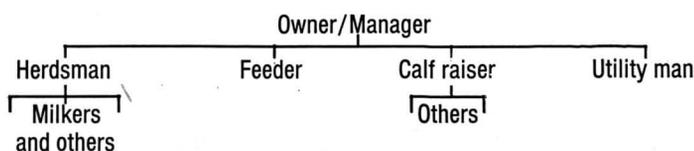
Tom Fuhrmann, D.V.M.  
Dairy Services of Arizona  
Tempe, Arizona

This paper will deal specifically with the subject of motivating and communicating with personnel on large commercial dairy operations. The typical dairy in Arizona has capacity to milk 500 cows two or three times per day. One milks 4,000 head three times per day and currently averages 20,000 lb. milk according to DHIA rolling herd averages. The average dairyman raises his own replacements, purchases all his feed, runs a labor intensive, highly leveraged operation on less than 30 acres of land. Providing veterinary service to these types of herds requires motivating and communicating with several types of people on each operation. Applying people management skills to implement herd health programs is essential.

The management structure on a large dairy operation might well be described as one of “specialization.” Diagram 1 depicts a management schematic of personnel positions on an average commercial dairy.

Typically the owner or manager directs day-to-day activities of his employees along with making daily and long term business decisions for the operation. The herdsman may be

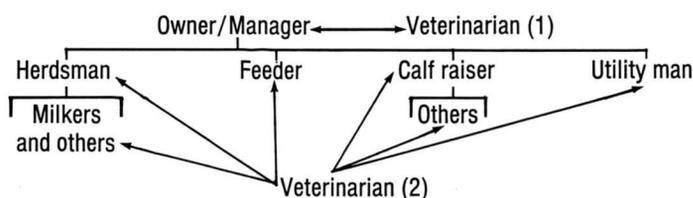
DIAGRAM 1: Management schematic for large dairy herds.



accountable only for daily animal care and stockmanship, or may be given responsibility over others including the calf-raiser, feeder or other peers as well as milkers and other general farm workers.

The veterinarian necessarily deals with farm personnel on two levels. The first is with the owner/manager. The second is directly with staff on a one-to-one basis (Diagram 2).

DIAGRAM 2: Veterinary interaction with large dairy herd staff.



1. Goal setting with owner/manager; help evaluate performance of staff.
2. Technical and instructional help for cow-side staff; monitor specific performance.

“Clearly, the number one factor in motivating people is feedback on results” (from *The One Minute Manager* by Blanchard and Johnson). This philosophy forms the basis for the approach I take with my clients. It implies four basic interactions with personnel on a dairy.

1. goal setting
2. technical and instructional support

3. monitor performance
4. reaction strategy

Goal setting is the result of the owner and veterinarian determining a specific objective for each area of the dairy. Specificity is essential (22,000 lb rolling herd average is too general even though it is the overall objective; 50% first service conception rate, 2% calf mortality, 150,000 SCC are specific goals in each area in the total operation). Once established, the goals must be understood and accepted by individual staff members responsible for an area or program.

Technical and instructional support must then be provided for staff personnel so that they become capable of fulfilling the responsibilities of their job. Here the veterinarian (at the owner's discretion) interacts one-on-one with staff personnel. Individuals respond best when they know not only *what* to do, but *why* also.

Monitoring individual performance is crucial. This implies a record system which allows for efficient information input and equally efficient analysis of performance stand-

ards for each area for which a goal was established. The individual staff person is much more aware of his responsibilities and performance when he is involved with the owner and veterinarian in record analysis. Performance needs to be compared against a comparable standard.

Reaction strategy occurs at both the level of manager and farm staff. Initially the owner must judge performance as acceptable or not. That judgment must then be passed to the individual staff member. Response to negative performance must be immediate, specific, definite and reaffirmed with positive feeling. Response to positive performance is essential, but often not acknowledged. It is perhaps the greatest contributor to "complacency."

"Management causes problems by failure to recognize the need to establish clear requirements, and it perpetuates those problems by not setting and maintaining a clear performance standard" (from: "*Quest for Quality*" by Philip Crosby).

## How I Motivate and Communicate with Clients in My Practice

**Tim Jordan, D.V.M.**  
Canyon, Texas 79015

You know I must be one of the luckiest people that I've ever known. I'll tell you a lot of reasons why. I have my health. I'm pleased to do the profession that I was trained to do, and I find it a very exciting time to be in veterinary medicine and to be in beef cattle practice. When I hear people speak and see what people like JoAnne Smith have done for our industry and I see what Wes Bonner is doing for our industry, I am excited to be in beef cattle practice.

When I look at what I learned in school, histology, parasitology, small animal medicine and surgery, it seems to be greatly different from what I do on a daily basis. I was completely unprepared for meeting a manager with a Ph.D. in nutrition asking about net energy values of gain, but he taught me and we learned together. Another one asked me, "How long is it going to take me to train this one?" These are all character building questions, I think. I should have more character than I know what to do with by now. When we look at our practice, we work from a service standpoint. Less than 2% of our gross income comes from drug sales or equipment sales, so we are selling our knowledge. That is the only thing we have to sell. If we are not able to communicate that properly so that it can get across, there's no way that we can be successful today or tomorrow. When we talk about communication and motivation, we have to talk about them as one and the same, because I don't think that you can communicate without necessarily motivating and vice-versa. So let's use a new term here as we finish up and call it

"communication."

If we look at some of the types of people that I work with and try to motivate and communicate with, I break the difficult people down into four groups. They are motivating the unmotivated, motivating the skeptical, motivating the superagreeable, and motivating the over-achiever. I think by doing this I have classified that person so that I may be able to discuss with them on terms that both of us can relate to. I have listed about seven rules of communication that we use on a daily basis and I want to share those with you. I have just one prime objective when I get through with this short discussion. That is I want to show you some communication rules that we use, outline how they're utilized on a daily basis, and then let you decide how they may be helpful to you.

*Initial impression.* We as a profession have an image problem. Beef cattle owners see us as a negative aspect of their operation, as an economic drain. I don't agree with that. I think that veterinarians can economically impact any operation that they are given the opportunity to do so. We have to take a stance of a more professional image, to be perceived not as a cowboy, but as a veterinary scientist. Now, you must be perceived as a veterinary scientist to the manager in management, but also as a veterinary scientist to the cowboys without making them feel they are inferior. I have at least a dozen cowboys that work for me that probably forgot more about doctoring cattle than I'll ever