

# Veterinarians Role in Feedyards

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Simply put ...It is all up to you. A veterinarian's involvement can be as simple as providing on-call service, or as complex as being part of a management team. Multiply yourself through people.

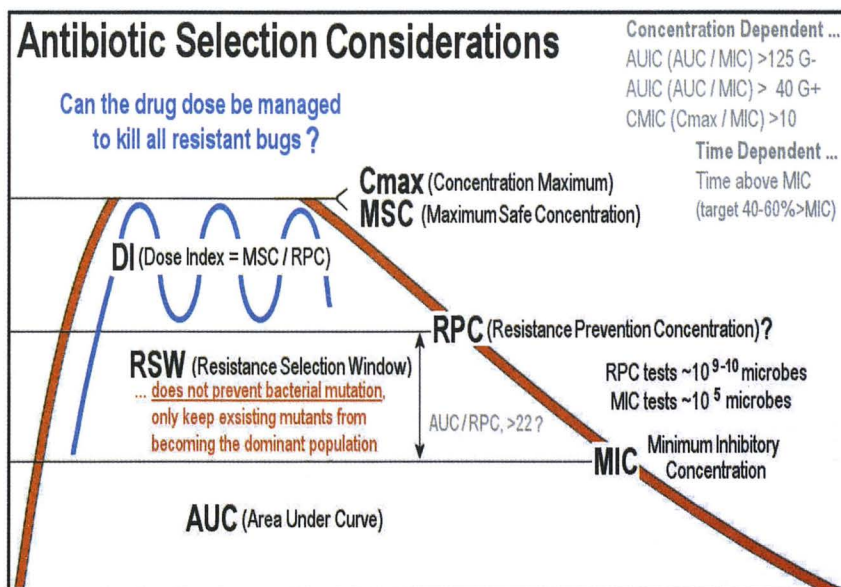
Possible Management Areas include:

- Health Maintenance Management
  - Biosecurity Basics for Livestock Operations
  - Biosecurity is a practice designed to prevent the spread of disease by minimizing the movement of biologic organisms (viruses, bacteria, rodents, etc.) onto and within an operation.
  - Biosecurity can be very difficult to maintain because the of the very complex interrelationships between management, biologic organisms and biosecurity.
  - Biocontainment maybe the only practical control for many diseases.
  - While developing and maintaining biosecurity is difficult it is the cheapest, most effective means of disease control available and no disease prevention program will work without it.
  - Health - Disease Complex Interactions



- Biosecurity in the “real world” is “A-RITS”:
- Biosecurity Major Components:
  - Assessment
  - Resistance to infection
  - Isolate from disease-causing agents
  - Traffic control to minimize potential exposure to disease-causing agents
  - Sanitation to minimize potential exposure to disease-causing agents
  - RITS are a set of hurdles
- Health Medical Management
  - Crew training and education for responsibilities and value of role to cattle care and to operation success
  - Informal listening sessions
  - Regularly scheduled training sessions that include “How To”
  - Safety: 4 “S’s” of safety: self, other, cattle and food
    - Cattle handling and proper procedures such as castration, dehorning, surgical pain management, sanitation, records management, etc.
  - Develop Receiving Processing Protocols
    - Processing schedules and in bounding services
      - Pregnancy management

- Surgery management (castration and dehorning)
- Quality control (QC) including equipment and application
- Product use protocols
  - Background, weight or age and targeted health concerns
  - Cattle movement
  - Legal and financial paper work
- Sick Cattle Management
  - Treatment timing ... sick cattle have to be found
    - *Cattle are prey animals*
    - It's in their genetic heritage not to look sick
    - Finding sick cattle early ... is not in our genetic heritage
    - Finding sick cattle early may be an impossible job
    - D.A.R.T.
      - Depression, Appetite, Respiratory index & Temperature.
      - An acronym for four areas that **MUST** be thoroughly assessed and monitored, especially high stress or high risk of disease.
  - The goal:
    - 1) A first-time treated animal is more likely to become a high-performing, profitable animal
    - 2) Treated animal stays with its group mates and does not suffer a disease relapse.
- A little on antibiotic usage
  - Antibiotic use guidelines
  - ELDU ... AMDUCA
  - Select and use antibiotics carefully
  - Avoid abs important in human medicine as first line therapy
  - Use the laboratory to help you select antibiotics
  - Avoid using combinations of antibiotics unless scientifically sound
  - Avoid inappropriate antibiotic use
  - Treatment programs should reflect best use principles
  - Treat the fewest number of animals possible
  - Treat for the recommended time period
  - Avoid environmental contamination with antibiotics
  - Keep records of antibiotic use
  - Follow label directions
  - Extralabel antibiotic use must follow FDA regulations
- Develop Necropsy Protocols



- Technique, data collection (paper and photo), sample handling and submission
- Pathology supervision and interpretation
- Field microbiology and sensitivity test
- Lung scoring, lameness ... data collection
- Disease monitoring at packing plants ( it is a fast necropsy)

Nutrition, typically focusing on newly received cattle and hospital ration development and management

- 3 “R’s”: right ration, right pen and right time
- Feedstuff quality control and feed additive use and handling

Environmental stress evaluation and management of cattle

- Surface maintenance
- Surface density and slope
- Mud control and mitigation
- Heat stress control and mitigation
- Water availability and air flow
- Dust control and mitigation

Data management and analysis

- Don’t let the data mislead anyone including you
- Collection, validation, reports

**Marketing alternative:** It is very important for veterinarians serving feedyards to, at the very least, understand the marketing decisions with which management must deal

- Understand how it affects cattle health
- Understand how it affects your activities on the yard

**Getting Started: How / Where do you start to get involved with feedyards?**

- Get involved in the industry ... join the cattlemen’s and attend LOCAL meetings.
- Put your thoughts about managing problems on paper ... consider recording your thoughts for about three to five minutes and have it transcribed ... these can become producer teaching notes and newspaper articles.
- Pick one ... maybe just one ... management problem or concern that improvement is measurable. Note: following up on “wrecks” may not be a good prospect.
- Don’t over-sell what can be accomplished ...
- Probe for “what they want, what they see as needs, what they are unhappy with ...”
- Best to ask OPEN questions and LISTEN to the answers.
- Know you can make them money and about how much (specific) ... don’t over estimate ... keep it to yourself at first and reevaluate the problem or concern and the prospects for economic improvement.
- As for a commitment ... that is to ask ... “If I can help you address these ... can we work together” ... when they say yes ... discuss more details of how you will offer service. (see setting objectives below).

**Objectives of Initial Feedyard Visit**

- Set up mutual objectives (list what you see needs to be tackled and find out what management wants tackled ... prioritize the top of the list. Make sure these are addressed at each visit ... must be able to track / measure progress.
- Evaluate type of cattle fed and methods of procurements
- Evaluate arrival and receiving programs and present processing programs
- Analyze nutritional and feeding program as it relates to animal health
- Observe and evaluate pen checking and sick cattle management
- Put together comprehensive programs to meet the needs of the feedyard and the type of cattle that are fed.

**Areas of Discussion and Evaluation Should Include:**

- Present processing and treatment programs, and changes made in the last year or two.
- Closeouts for the past year. These should include total medicine and processing costs for each pen

- Complete hospital and processing records for some past problem pens
- Cattle: sources, weights, gender
- Special marketing issues
- **Other Areas that Need to be Discussed:**
- Frequency of visits
- Length of visit each time
- Degree of involvement in management areas and in personnel selection
- Training of personnel
- Philosophy on management versus medicine
- Philosophy on procurement of drugs
- Laboratory usage
- Processing programs
- Treatment programs
- Fee Structure – KEEP ALL BILLS CURRENT
- Develop a list of areas to target and objectives.

#### Information considered during a feedlot visit

- Look over a current yard sheet checking each pen's records for:
  - Days on feed
  - Hospital head count
  - Number and percent dead
  - Processing cost
  - Treatment costs
  - Dry matter consumption
- Review of summary on a current yard sheet for the following:
  - Year-to-date death losses
  - Monthly death loss
  - Location of deaths (pen/hospital)
  - Number of days treated prior to death
  - Causes of deaths
  - Buller percentage
  - Hospital percentage
  - Railer percentage
  - Treatment costs.

Always follow up with management to find out their observations and concerns. Then spend time with the people outside doing the actual work. During a visit try to accomplish the following:

- Walk problem pens with head cowboy
- Consult as many cowboys as possible for their observations and concerns
- Work and visit with the processing crew.
- Review processing records
- Work and visit with the hospital crew.
- Review hospital records
- Walk the hospital pens with the hospital crew and head cowboy
- Necropsy ALL dead cattle with as many people in attendance as possible so they can observe.
- Drive the entire yard with manager and/or head cowboy looking for problems and opportunities.

The visit ends by reviewing findings and suggesting. Use a feedlot checklist, hospital checklist, processing checklist and pen management checklist to pinpoint problem areas, and a copy of this is reviewed and left with the feedlot. If necessary, a follow-up written report with suggestions and any major changes is sent to owner or management within a few days.