

professional service and they love their animal, contrary to the admonition of the old cowman never to fall in love with one of the beasts! They do and perhaps this is the key to it. Additionally, these people are, even now, frequently complaining about the growing indifference of veterinarians to their problems but they are not likely in the foreseeable future to go away; in fact, I think they are going to increase in numbers rapidly and if we persist in our present eagerness to continue to

develop a line of work even more pleasant and less demanding upon our time, I wonder who is going to be looking after their animals. I know that we need the large herd specialist and I know that his necessary economic bias precludes him from providing service to this type of client. Do we then need a new type specialist in bovine practice? Is there fertile opportunity in this direction for bovine practice? Thank you.

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## Programmed Dairy Practice

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We are about 60% dairy, 30% beef and the rest horses. I think that if there is one concept that I find in the herd health management, or herd health practice or whatever term you want to call it, is a positive entity. Fire engine, or a called practice, is a negative entity. I think clients respond to this program very quickly and if you think back about your relationship with the old boy who called and knew he was going to spend money, they are not too good; it is a very negative thing then! When you are on a positive aspect, attempting to prevent problems from happening, I think he respects this approach; I think that he has been geared to this like he has been geared to having his automobile service problems or he has been geared to defrosting his refrigerator! I think the general public is now geared for prevention of problems. We are geared to prevent these problems but that is neither here nor there. There is one other factor which to me is very, very important. These individuals are working on my clients. I have 18 herds on herd health management programs, average age of client being 34 years old. The oldest client is 55 and these people belong to the PTA! Some of them are presidents of school boards; one of them teaches judo; they all have children who have 4-H projects; one of them is the president of the Texas Holstein Association. They have other things and these people want help. They do not figure their own income tax; they do not figure their own rations and they want people to come and say this is how we are going to do this—with a positive attitude and the end results are going to be so and so. When you make this projection you have

to have a little bit of confidence behind you. I would hate to see you put out that small light or whatever it might be. In other words, what I am really trying to say is that we do not have the problem here where dairying is a part-time occupation—these people are full-time dairymen. I have tried to put together the reason that I became involved in herd health management. At a meeting in Houston, a nutritionist from Iowa made a statement that he had a number of calves in eastern Iowa for a number of years and one day he woke up to the realization that a boy who had graduated a year before could get the same price that he could for pulling a calf or treating milk fever. His years of knowledge did not net him one penny except a little extra backache which hurt him a little bit more from squatting in that position that you may have had to get in! His hands got a little colder but he was not getting paid for his knowledge or experience. This made a little bit of sense to him. Have you read the article, "Are You a Veterinary Fire Fighter?" You need to get a copy of this. This is probably what we are all talking about. When I read this article, I got mad and, after all, who is going to tell me it is not alright to do these things! Do you really think that the veterinary profession in the United States is meeting the public need? Or, are we meeting your need? Are you going to tell agriculture what they need? I can guarantee you one thing: if we go on like we are, others will step in. We have students graduating today that want part of our market. All we have to do is what we did in the poultry business. We said that nobody wanted to treat poultry and we gave it

all up to the "feds" and the feed companies. I firmly believe that bovine practice will go the same route down the line. Not all of them, do not misunderstand me. There is still going to be a call for the backyard cow. The main reason again is educated clients. When I graduated I believed that everybody was an idiot and we were all knowing! Of course it does not take too long to figure that out! I think my clients are well read people—they know what's going on. Some of them are college graduates and they are wide awake people who are not going to put up with second class service. You still have some clients who will, do not misunderstand me! I think our education process as it was laid out and, as far as I am concerned, is still being laid out, is modeling our profession after a physician who already has a poor reputation for greed and disregard for public business. Where we are looking at one animal at one time, for one purpose, we have to get off this kick because I do not think that is what agriculture needs. I do not want to put this organization on the spot. I really believe this. We have to change our concepts and our ideas and meet these challenges.

The marriage counselor says that everybody falls into one of four groups. One type is a person who has a complete change of ideas with his associates. When you get into herd health management, you get to knowing these people personally. It is an entirely different relationship than you ordinarily have with a client. You tell him, "Joe, I do not like the way you are milking," and he says, "Well, we are doing the best we can." He is not offended and you are not offended. You can go on and make this exchange of ideas because this relationship gets very close. I run a one-man practice by myself. I occasionally work into the night a little bit but not too often. Dollarwise we run about \$36.00 per cow, per year as total cost. We do forage sampling through a veterinary owned company. I own a little stock in it and if this is considered commercial then I am sorry!

Our herd health programs fall into groups such as management, mastitis, infertility, calf management, nutrition and client education. Management includes record keeping where we put

in a program for a person and keep him on it. He keeps the records up to date and we examine them for dollars spent on an animal; how many times it had mastitis, milk fever, or any problems with her milk production and what we think we have made off her that year. Some people really enjoy keeping records! Our goals and our projections are two things: one is that I do not want to treat a sick cow. We govern our vaccination programs and all our herds are vaccinated. Fertility is another area where we are greatly remiss. I think any veterinarian should be able to predict heat periods. They should be able to say that this cow is going to be in heat in five days and she had better be in heat if you want to have that client's confidence.

On our periodic visits, depending on the size of the herd, we check the uterus of every cow. If they are recently calved then we check them and again in three weeks. Another problem we have is letting the drug companies decide what they think is good. Incidentally, you may try the new vaginal douche which has been from the one used by women.

Our whole calf management program is directed toward prevention and not treatment. This particular herd in three years has lost four calves and three of these were accidents. We have gone a long way and I think the calf program should be toward prevention and not cure. We do some dehorning and program management. We do it mainly because our clients will not. They will not dehorn or remove supermammary teats while they are small, so we give them service. They say we are too high priced and we say that is right, but we are going to get it done anyway!

Sanitation goes without saying. It works into all the other parts of the program, including milking. The last part, client education, is an important part of our program. We have local programs with the county agent and we also have special programs for clients only about every three months. We have refreshments and these old boys bring all their help and we really have a ball! An educated client is a good client. We pass out a lot of literature. I thank you for giving a poor boy from Texas a chance to "say his thing."