

Reach Out and Touch Someone — Hybrid Radio and Phone Systems

Donald L. Rothbauer, DVM
County Veterinary Hospital, S.C.
1320 15th Avenue
Bloomer, WI 54724

Communication is one of the keys of a successful practice. The veterinarian must be able to communicate with clients, the office, other veterinarians within the practice, home, the answering machine, and the experts. The two way radio system does not allow all these contacts to be made from the practice vehicle. Cellular phones do, but with some disadvantages. Air time must be rented. One office line must be reserved for communication with the mobiles. Conferences between mobiles are difficult to organize. Numbers must be dialed. Hybrids are available that offer the advantages of both systems.

Two way radio systems can be equipped with a telephone interconnect. Each mobile in the system is equipped with a microphone with a touch-tone pad. The phone line is accessed by depressing the "star" button. The line is disconnected by pushing the "#" button. An interrupted tone on the radio indicates an incoming call. Conversation is one direction at a time. The button is pushed to talk. The button is released to listen.

Communication with the office and the other mobiles is through the two way radio. Communication with clients, home, the answering machine, and anyone else with a phone is through the interconnect. The range of the interconnect is limited to the range of the radio.

The cost of the interconnect should be from \$1000 to \$1500 installed. Each microphone with touch tone pad

will cost from \$125 to \$250. In addition, there will be a monthly charge for the phone line and an installation charge each time the radio is transferred to another vehicle.

The FCC does not allow the use of a telephone interconnect in some high use areas (i.e. near metropolitan areas).

An alternative system called "SMR" (Specialized Mobile Radio) utilizes cellular-like technology. Businesses can rent use of a common base and tower and interconnect. Multiple lines are provided by SMR. The user need purchase only the radio units for the office and practice vehicles. Users are "trunked" onto separate lines as they use the system. Two way communication is allowed between office and mobiles. Each of the units may be used as a phone. The mobile units should cost around \$650. Systems that provide buttonless phone communication would cost more.

SMR offers the advantage over the interconnect system of less initial cost and greater (possibly unlimited) range. In multiple unit practices, tower rent and phone fees should be considerably less than cellular phone charges. Monthly charges will be higher than with the interconnect system.

When updating your radio system, be aware that there are alternatives to cellular phones. Some systems allow you to utilize your present radio equipment.

Milking Parlor Efficiency

Jenks S. Britt, DVM
Diplomate ABVP - Dairy
Animal Health Management Services
P.O. Box 787
Russellville, KY 42276

We monitor milking parlor efficiency as to, pounds of milk per person milking, per hour of milking time. We think having high levels of milk production per hour of milking time is critical for profit on modern dairy farms. Our goal is a minimum of 850 pounds per hour for each person involved in the milking process. To achieve this,

cow flow and automation must be good and daily milk production must be high. High daily production is most directly related to nutrition.

The chart below shows how many cows per person per hour must be milked at different production levels to reach 850 pounds per hour.