

# The University of Georgia's Mobile Field Investigational Vehicle

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## Introduction

In December, 1974, in order to support various instructional missions, especially those related to food producing animal medicine, the College of Veterinary Medicine of the University of Georgia acquired a motor home type vehicle. This vehicle, suitably equipped, served as a mobile laboratory and was primarily employed in the implementation of various herd health and consultative-medicine programs conducted by the Department of Large Animal Medicine and Surgery. The following describes the physical characteristics of the unit and how it was employed.

## The Vehicle\*

The unit, acquired through the usual competitive bidding process for approximately \$12,500, consisted of a standard production model 24-foot motor home. Previous discussions with representatives of several motor home manufacturers indicated that a specifically designed vehicle requiring production alterations from usual would cost significantly more.

The vehicle was of steel construction with metal under-belly and foam insulation; built on a Dodge RM 350 chassis and powered by a 440 cu. in. Dodge V-8 engine with automatic transmission. The vehicle was equipped with a 36-gallon primary and a 29-gallon auxiliary fuel tank and a 36-gallon fresh water tank. In addition to standard 110/112 volt electrical and lighting system with 30 amp converter, the unit was equipped with a 4KW Kohler generator with charger. A 25-foot power service cord with 100-foot extension provided for electrical service when on the farm. The usual interior equipment included a 6 cu. ft. gas/electric refrigerator. The vehicle with ease could safely transport six persons, including the driver.

In order to facilitate interior renovations, the floor plan selected included two, separated twin bed configurations, each located on either side at the very rear of the coach. These beds, constructed on plywood decks, were separated at the rear by a night stand that could be extended to form a table. The dinette area was located directly behind the driver's compartment. The spatial relationship was selected to facilitate driver and "cockpit" passenger com-

munication with those riding in the dinette area. In addition, a floor plan was selected that provided, without extensive renovation, adequate storage for equipment, supplies, clothing and books. The coach was heated by a 17,000 BTU propane wall furnace and air conditioned via a 13,000 BTU roof-mounted air conditioner.

## Vehicle Modifications

The twin bed mattresses were removed and one-half inch plywood counter tops anchored to vertical supports connected to the mattress decks. Electrical strips with a multiplicity of outlets were installed by plugging into the standard electrical outlet.

Additional storage space was constructed between the installed counter tops and the plywood mattress supports. This space was used to store and transport medicine bags, analytical equipment and various reagents stored in large plastic laboratory bottles. A communications system, consisting of a "throat" microphone for the driver, a platform microphone in the dinette area, and speakers in the driver compartment and on the bulkhead to the rear of the dinette area were installed.

## Equipment and Procedures

A small laboratory incubator was mounted on one of the counter tops. Other equipment items included a small spectrophotometer, binocular microscope, small torsion balance, small serological water bath, a clinical centrifuge, necropsy instrument and a propane torch which served as a Bunsen burner. The refrigerator contained adequate microbiological media.

Procedures included: CBC, fibrinogen, sera harvest, fecal flotation, urinalysis and a few serological procedures.

## Conclusion

It was considered that the vehicle served as a valuable teaching aid in the implementation of certain programs.

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