

# A Livestock Producers Fair

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I want to talk about an income producing idea that I have been using in my practice for a number of years. We call this event a Livestock Producers Fair and believe that this name has served well.

Our Livestock Producers Fair is an educational day. It serves as a client appreciation day. It is a day to promote veterinary medicine. It is a trade or marketing show. This event provides our practice an opportunity for recognition and advertising. This day is an excellent opportunity to make this a very good income producing day. We can add up the dollars of income that are produced that single day but there is no way to measure the dollars that are produced in the weeks and months that follow.

Like many of you I knew client education meetings were of value but really did not have any reason to have them very often in my practice. Several years ago I decided there might be something to gain from such a meeting. I started holding one big client educational meeting and dinner for my clients trying to take advantage of a seasonal work pattern in our practice. My practice is in a wheat pasture area and in the fall many stocker calves are purchased and respiratory problems are a very important part of the practice. I started this client meeting during this fall period to educate clients and to gain recognition for our practice. I used this opportunity to promote certain health programs and in some instances to help promote the use of certain products. I soon learned that this could become a tool to promote the practice as well as increase dispensing.

**It was from this type of client meetings that the idea of my Livestock Producers Fair originated.**

The Livestock Producers Fair, I think is a very professional day with the emphasis on client education. I strongly feel that the educated client is the one which can make you money. We make this event an income producing day by using it as a means to market a very large volume of drugs.

Because one certainly has to be dispensing in order to take advantage of this Producers Fair I feel I need to express some of my personal views on drug dispensing by the veterinarian.

I think every bovine practitioner needs to be dispensing drugs. There are many reasons why we should be dispensing but some of the more important reasons are these. Your clients need to buy animal health products and they are going to buy them. The market is already there. When your client goes to the feed store or animal health center, they not only get the sought after product but they also get all of the misinformation and other things that are available at these kinds of places. The image of the veterinary profession usually is not being elevated in these types of businesses.

**There is no one in a better position than the veterinarian to detail the client about the use of veterinary products. I want my clients to get their advice from me. If I have an opportunity to talk to that client, even though very briefly, I can usually favorably improve his knowledge of the veterinary profession and by doing so indirectly promote myself and my practice.**

On a per visit basis your client has a greater need to go to the animal health store more visits per month or per year than he does to come to the veterinarian for an actual veterinary service. This means the feed store or animal health store has more contacts and more opportunity to influence your client than you do.

I think that making contacts with the client is the secret for a successful business. If that client does not come through that front door or does not call us on the telephone, what opportunity do we have to do anything for him?

If that client comes to your clinic for some item, you may through that contact be able to generate a farm visit, a post-mortem, a day long vaccination or pregnancy examination trip. Several hundred dollars could be realized from this contact that could have been otherwise lost if the client would have gone elsewhere.

**I do not want to see that client only after everything else has failed. I have found that these situations are not good for myself or the client.**

I want to promote veterinary medicine in the mind of that client every chance I can and when I do this I am indirectly promoting myself and will usually realize a profit from that particular contact.

Now I want to tell you actually what our Livestock Producers Fair is and what it can do in terms of dollars and cents. Besides making money on this day I want this to be a learning experience for my clients. I want to put myself and my clinic in the thoughts of these clients. I want to improve the image of the veterinary profession. I want to make this a fun day for my client that will not be forgotten.

**There is a fair-like atmosphere with many booths representing animal health companies, livestock marketing firms and other agriculture related companies.**

We try to have booths represented by companies that we do business with and are merchandising their products. These company people are detailing clients and trying to sell their products either that day or in the days or months to come when that client may feel he has a particular need for it.

In addition to the companies that we do direct business with, we also have other companies present which are agriculture related such as Harvestore, computer companies, commodity companies, etc.

We just successfully completed this year's fair last month.

There were thirty-three booths and companies represented. I would like to list them. Many are the companies you do business with: Norden, Haver-Lockhart, Diamond-Shamrock, Merck, Ceva, Staley, Diamond Syntex, Vitaferm, Pioneer, Pitman-Moore, Pfizer, Cutter, Cynamid, Ralgro, Bioceutic, Starbar-Temple tag, Hess and Clark, Beecham, Western Veterinary Supply, Town & Country Veterinary Supply, Northwest Feeds, a commodity firm, a computer service, Prairie Livestock Company – West Point, Mississippi, Oklahoma Department of Agriculture Marketing Division, Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association, Snell Fencing Company, Oklahoma Sheep Expansion Inc., Hitch Feedlot & Enterprises, Animal Division of the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Oklahoma State University Research Department and Oklahoma State Diagnostic Laboratory.

These companies having booths pay a fee for exhibiting this day. There are however several booths that add a lot to the fair that for obvious reasons would not be charged. Examples being groups like the Cattlemen's Association which were present all day registering brands.

This year's Livestock Producers Fair was held on Saturday, October 22nd and was very successful. We had it a little earlier this year in order to coincide with the fall cattle rush. Many dollars worth of merchandise was sold on this day. Many more dollars worth of products have been sold since that time as a result of the representation of the fair. We can tell if the fair is responsible for the sale because the client will often tell us he saw the product at the fair. I will discuss actual dollar values later in this presentation.

**We sent out about five hundred invitations to our clients. We advertised in the local papers for two or three weeks. We also received very good coverage by newspaper reporters from some of the larger newspapers in the area in the form of a news story relating to the fair.**

We started the fair at ten o'clock in the morning. This gave people who had to come a considerable distance time to arrive and get their booths set up.

We served a noon luncheon for a couple hours. The past two fairs I have been fortunate to have a Cutter representative from South Texas to come and set up a unique steak cooking experience. He cooked one hundred pounds of small cubes of steak in the booth area in a large cast iron pot. My wife prepared various cheese and crackers, fresh vegetables, dip, cookies and drinks. We served a very good lunch to over two hundred fifty clients.

Starting after lunch we began our afternoon educational programs. We conducted these learning seminars in a room adjacent to the large hall where the exhibits were. These educational seminars were thirty to forty minute presentations by various company personnel. Producers were able to stay in the booth area or attend a learning session if they so desired.

The learning seminars that were presented were as follows: Synchronized breeding of heifers with Syncro-mate B, the use of microbial cultures in the treatment of animals,

wheat pasture bloat control, heifer management–stocker and feeder abortion and estrus synchronization, the role of *Haemophilus Somnus* in respiratory and reproductive problems, coccidiosis control, the use of sustained sulfas in the treatment of respiratory condition, and control of lice and grubs.

Our booths began closing about six o'clock in the evening as the building was being set up with tables and chairs necessary to present our formal evening program.

**We served a very good dinner to about two hundred to three hundred producers.**

We had an educational program following the dinner. This year we had three speakers in the evening. Dr. Al Edwards, Kansas State University, spoke on Stocker and Feeder Management. Dr. Homer Connell, Lee's Summit, Missouri spoke on The Use of Sustained Action Oxytetracyclines in the Prevention and Treatment of Shipping Fever. Alvin Wilson, Merck & Company spoke on Ivermectin—A New Product.

We try to make this an educational and fun day. When the speakers finish we give away many door prizes. One always wants to give door prizes at the very last so that people do not go home early. Most of the companies present will donate door prizes in addition to the fee that they pay. We also purchase a number of door prizes in order to make the drawing a really big event. Everyone likes to win something.

We try to stimulate buying as much as possible. We want the client that would be interested in buying to have that opportunity but at the same time we want the small operator to feel comfortable without buying anything.

We try to make as many deals for that one day as we can. Some companies may have special deals. We many times lower our prices on certain products or have free goods to make buying more attractive. You can be assured any company that is making a presentation in the learning seminars will have many orders placed for that product. Also if you have one of the evening speakers promoting a particular product you had better have a large supply on hand at the clinic because it will go fast the next few days following the meeting.

Many of these companies will have promotional ideas or prizes or some other means to stimulate purchasing, but some companies will not.

In order to stimulate sales the past two fairs I purchased an I100 Remington automatic shotgun and gave this prize to those people making purchases. They received one chance for every fifty dollars worth of purchases. All other prizes given this day do not require any purchasing. I know that giving some nice prizes has stimulated a lot of sales.

**How is the fair subsidized? Most of the companies that were present were charged one hundred dollars for their booth space. Those companies that made a presentation during the afternoon paid an additional fifty dollars making the fee one hundred fifty dollars.**

Companies participating in the evening program provided greater sums of money, in some cases as much as five

hundred dollars, but this fee also usually would include booth space and probably an afternoon seminar spot. Most of these companies also presented door prizes. The companies that are represented tell me they are getting their money's worth.

How much does it cost to have a Livestock Producers Fair? As I have already mentioned it cost me a little over three thousand dollars this year. Food is of course the greatest expenditure. But there are many other expenses such as advertising, invitations, postage, building rental, door prizes which are purchased in addition to those donated by exhibitors and many other things to take into consideration.

What are the profits for this Producers Fair? It is very hard to place a value on how much good has been derived from the educational portion of the program. I am sure that much has been gained by increasing the clients' knowledge. Many products will be sold in the coming weeks and months as a result of what that client has seen and heard, both in the educational and booth presentations.

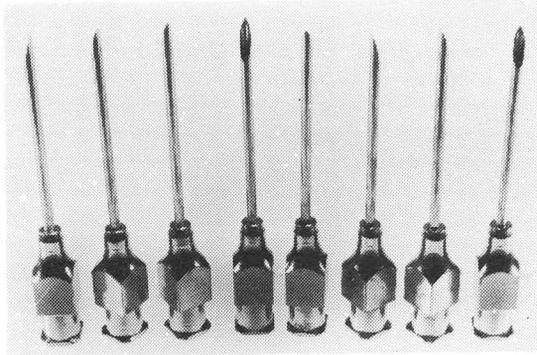
**It is impossible to place a value on the profit that is made from the good will, the public recognition and just good ethical advertising that you have gained by invitations and newspaper advertisement. The profits are not just a one day sales figure.**

The sales that were made that day of our Livestock Producers Fair was over twenty thousand dollars. I feel that the sales which will occur later, the good will and the public recognition will represent much more than will ever be measured.

**We have been talking today about money making ideas for our practice. I have tried to present the money side of a Livestock Producers Fair but I do not want you to forget that the money making portion is really secondary. The real purpose in our Livestock Producers Fair is to provide an educational day and a fun day for our client. We want to promote veterinary medicine and by doing so will indirectly promote ourselves. I feel that our Livestock Producers Fair has fulfilled all of these goals and has been a good income producing idea for our practice.**

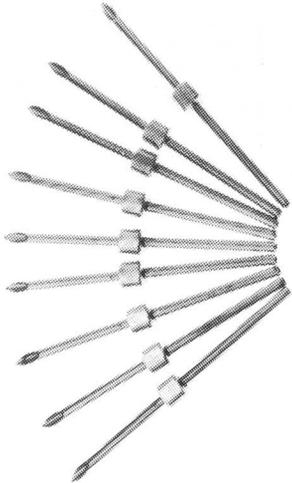
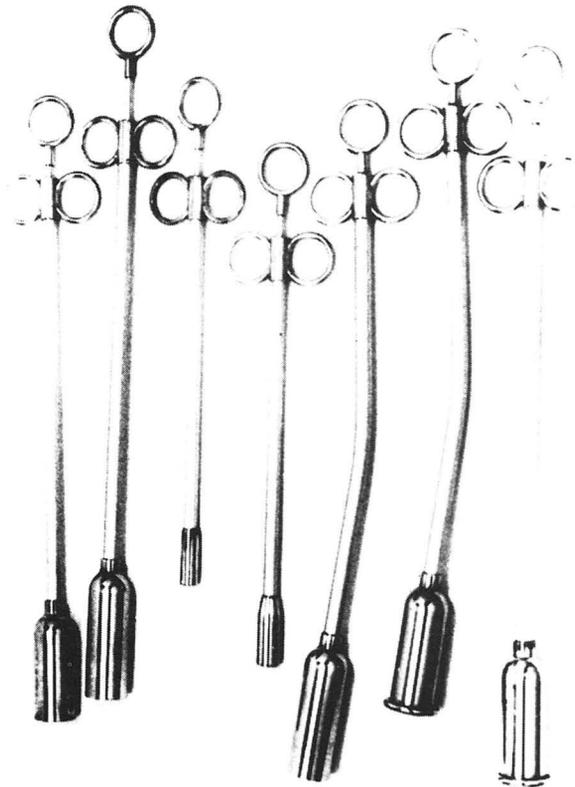


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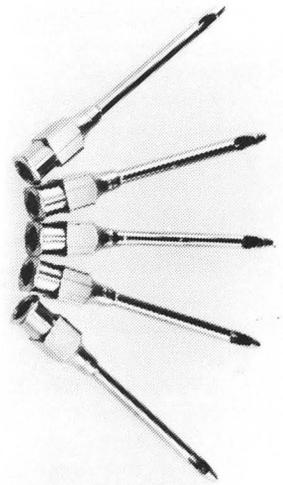


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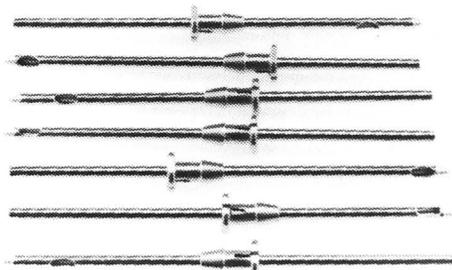


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