

Leading from the bottom up: Improving leadership on your farms and in your practice

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Abstract

Embracing bottom-up leadership concepts on farms and within practices replaces aged practices of top-down management with a more inclusive and empowering strategy. Utilizing bottom-up concepts fosters a culture of shared responsibility and understanding because the individuals are motivated to achieve success because they fully understand the “why” behind everything we are asking of them.

Key words: leadership, training, bottom-up, development

Employee engagement and empowerment

Effective leadership on farm and in practice must transcend task delegation. It entails inspiring and motivating employees to go beyond their routine duties, in a world of physically demanding and repetitive tasks, to provide individuals with a deeper sense of purpose. Each task has a “why” behind it, and each employee performing a task needs to understand how that task contributes to the farm or practice’s success. Employees who are encouraged to participate in decision-making or problem-solving processes will feel a sense of ownership in their role.

Engaged and empowered employees pay closer attention to cattle health and welfare. Working with motivated and involved employees allows us, as the veterinarian, to implement best practices sooner and with more ease.

Communication and collaboration

By fostering open communication and collaboration, all employees are encouraged to share feedback. Effective communication from all members of the team can lead to a clearer understanding of the challenges on farm. This leads to more accurate and timely decisions.

Innovation and continuous improvement

A culture of innovation and continuous improvement will empower employees to speak up. Each employee must be treated as an intelligent and creative member of the team. Give ownership in roles and foster a sense of pride in success. If you make sure that an employee has a valued insight on the team, you will be alerted to new and different ways of doing things that you hadn’t considered.

Conclusion

By embracing a leadership style that fosters growth in the team from the bottom-up, we can advise farms to be more successful or profitable by helping to increase employee engagement, improve communication and a culture of innovation.

