

SESSION 4

FOOD-PRODUCING ANIMAL (LARGE/FARM ANIMAL) VETERINARY MEDICINE

****SAFETY NOTICE****

Safety concerns are a greater issue when working around large animals than when handling companion animals. Serious injuries and even death may result. Though the use of patient restraint (physical, chemical, or both) is a paramount tool for the safety and welfare of both the animal and those working around the animal, it is still easy to be kicked, bitten, struck by the animal's head and horns, or even run over and trampled by an animal that is bigger, stronger, and heavier than a human. Post Advisors and leaders must stress to participants the importance of being aware of the animal's body language and always following the instructions of whomever is in charge of the animal.

DESCRIPTION OF SESSION

This session provides participants with an introductory understanding of the diverse field of food-producing animal (large animal) veterinary medicine. Participants may have the opportunity to interact with various species of food-producing animals, including cattle (dairy or beef), sheep, goats, and pigs. (Note: Horses are covered in session 5).

CATEGORY

- Health
- Veterinary Medicine

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Describe the different species of animals that food-producing animal veterinarians work with.
- Discuss the different health care services that food-producing animal veterinarians provide to these different animal species.
- Understand the diversity of facilities, vehicles, and equipment used by food-producing animal veterinarians.
- Identify some of the challenges and benefits of being a food-producing animal veterinarian.
- Understand what contagious diseases are and what the food-producing animal veterinarian's role is in keeping populations of food animals healthy and free of contagious diseases.
- Understand the educational requirements for veterinarians, including high school and college courses that would be beneficial.
- Tour a food-producing animal veterinary facility (free standing or mobile).
- Observe how to give a physical exam to a food-producing animal.

SUPPLIES

- Laptop computer or equipment to view videos

- Examples of different medical forms and animal (herd) records
- Stethoscope

ADVISOR NOTE:

Be aware that the observation of a live surgical procedure—with its associate blood, smells, and visual experiences—might not appeal to every participant. Be aware of and sensitive to any indications of uneasiness, sensitivity, sickness, fainting, etc., that may occur with your participants. Allow those participants who do not wish to participate in portions of this session to be excused until they are comfortable. Be sensitive to these participants' feelings, and at the same time be observant to prevent any peer mockery or harassment. Obtain permission from parents or guardians, if appropriate for your post.

Before Explorers enter a working environment, review the hazards and risks faced in veterinary medicine; the precautions that are taken to prevent injury, illness, and disease transmission to caregivers and other animals; and the use of appropriate controls. Explorers should be provided appropriate training and personal protective equipment (PPE) before entering the working environment. Please consider whether they may need to be excluded from certain procedures, areas, or exams (e.g., X-rays or clinical laboratory procedures), and make appropriate safety accommodations. Due to the known hazards of ionizing radiation (X-rays), Explorers may not participate in the taking of radiographs. Trained laboratory technicians or their equivalent must be in immediate attendance whenever any clinical laboratory procedures are being carried out.

As you engage your post in activities each meeting, please include comments, discussions, and feedback to the group relating to **Character, Leadership, and Ethics**. These are important attributes that make a difference in the success of youth in the workplace and in life.

ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 1

Speaker: Introduction to Food Animal Medicine

Have the speaker address these topics:

- What are food-producing animals? What are the most common types treated? What are the most unusual species?
- Where are some of the different venues where food-producing animal veterinarians might work? Include discussion of feedlots, open range, closed facilities (hog barns, milking barns, etc.), backyards, zoos, circuses, etc.
- What are some of the major differences between the work and responsibilities of a companion animal veterinarian and a food animal veterinarian? (Discuss single individual vs. a herd population.)
- What are some of the ethical concerns a food animal veterinarian must deal with?
- What are the requirements to become a food animal veterinarian?
- How is emergency/after-hours care provided to food animals?

ACTIVITY 2

Restraint and Physical Exams

- Show a video demonstrating a complete physical exam on a food-producing animal. Select a video from a reputable online source or other resource. View the video in advance to make sure it is appropriate.
- Have the veterinarian discuss and demonstrate an organized (head-to-tail or system-by-system) exam procedure.
- Have the veterinarian demonstrate the proper way to take a patient's temperature. Discuss what the expected normal findings should be. Discuss any species or breed variations that might be encountered.
- Have the veterinarian demonstrate the proper way to listen to the animal's heart and lungs. Have the participants auscultate the animal's heart and lungs in the same manner.
- Have Explorers make a chart (or add to the ones they made for another session) to record the animal's temperature, heart rate (pulse), and number of respirations. Design the chart to accommodate numerous animals of different species and breeds that will be examined in other sessions of this curriculum.
- Discuss and demonstrate various methods for proper restraint of an animal for a physical exam. (Participants will not be involved in moving, restraining, or handling large animals.)
- Have the veterinarian discuss the proper methods for obtaining blood samples.

ACTIVITY 3

Tours

- Tour a food-producing animal veterinarian's facility (free standing or mobile). Observe the different types of equipment used with food-producing animals.
- Make a list of the types of equipment a food-producing veterinarian might carry in his practice vehicle when he visits a farm or ranch.
- Watch an animal being born. (Obtain permission from a parent or guardian.)
- Watch a cesarean section live or on video. (Obtain permission from a parent or guardian.)
- Attend a state or county fair, and visit the livestock barn area and livestock exhibit area. Observe how the animals are cared for, fed and watered, groomed, and housed. Identify the different species and breeds of livestock, and note the primary purposes of each species and breed. Discuss your observations with your post.
- Tour a dairy cow facility. Tour a beef cow facility (free range or feedlot). What differences and similarities did you observe between the two facilities?

ADVISOR NOTE

Some sample questions are below. They are designed to help the participants apply what they have learned to their own interests. You are welcome to use these questions or develop your own questions that relate to your post or specific area of focus.

REFLECTION

- *What aspects of the food-producing animal veterinarian session interested you the most?*
 - *What ethical responsibilities does this type of veterinarian have to their patient(s) and the owners of the animals?*
 - *What did you learn during this session about the number of services a food-producing animal veterinarian provides?*
 - *What can you do now, during your time as a student, to prepare yourself for a career in veterinary medicine? Why is this topic important?*
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