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2020 – A year to remember

For most of us, this past year has been a year like no other. There have been many challenges and opportunities. It is a good time to reflect on the past year in terms of your dairy farm operation. You can look at many different aspects of your farm for what was done well and should be repeated and for areas that could use improvement. This will include finances, agronomy, farm equipment, housing, employees, animal health, production, etc.

We offer services of reviewing your animal health and production data. Once all the data is complete for 2020, we will be creating a database of all our clients interested in knowing how they are doing in this respect. Many farms that are already having this done and see the value in having this review performed. Once the information is compiled, we present the data to you in comparison to:

- Your herds previous year's data (if we have performed one)
- Other herds in our practice (can be broken down by herd size and milking system)
- Ontario/Canadian numbers if available
- Industry standards

This is very helpful in identifying your farms strong points and areas of opportunity and may help prioritize your short and long term goals for your farm. There are many parameters that are looked at a more frequent basis, but it is always nice to have a full years' worth of data to compare to previous years and other similar farms.

Some of the areas we go over are disease events in cows and heifers. We have traditionally looked at the following parameters in cows:

- Retained Placenta (after birth)
- Milk fevers
- Displaced Abomasums (twisted stomachs)
- Pregnancy loss
- Stillborn calves
- Twinning rates
- Lameness
- Ketosis

It is important to analyze these factors as they present significant economic and animal impacts. If these are elevated, there will be discussion on what can improve some of these parameters which will help the dairy farm overall.

We will now also look at **mastitis, diarrhea and pneumonia** in the **cows** and **diarrhea and pneumonia in calves** as they should be recorded for ProAction.

Another important part of the review is **culling reasons**. Important information can be derived from summarizing these that can help make future management decisions. This will be performed for both cows and heifers.

Heifer rearing is the 2nd biggest cost on dairy farms, behind feed costs, so we definitely do touch on this as well. There are parameters that we look at to ensure heifers are entering the system efficiently and economically.



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Annual Review Process

1. Inform herd vet of intent of having one
2. Discuss with herd vet about data collection (especially if not being done now)
3. Complete data becomes available for vets towards end of Feb/early March
4. Vet clinic needs to summarize data in presentable form
5. Vet clinic compiles data to create databases
6. Schedule time to present data and make management decisions (can be beneficial to include nutritionist and other management team members). This will often be 1 -2 hours
7. Create/discuss goals for your farm with your management team

We look forward to providing a systematic review of your animal health and production records to make a meaningful impact on the management of your dairy farm.

Andrew deHaan, DVM



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Important changes to our Covid-19 protocols

With the increasing presence of Covid-19 in our area, our team is taking additional precautions during our farm visits, as highlighted below, to help mitigate the spread of this disease in our community. Please be aware that as this pandemic develops, we may have to adjust our procedures in response.

Veterinary farm visits

- Once on farm, we will try to maintain a distance of at least six feet from people wherever practically possible
- Care will be taken to wash and disinfect hands and contacted tools and equipment before re-entering our vehicle
- **A mask will be worn whenever practically possible, especially in closed air spaces or when physical distancing is not possible. We would like our clients to do the same while we are on farm.**

Technician farm visits

- Techs will continue to assist veterinarians as necessary. The same precautions as above will apply
- Technicians will continue to provide services, such as dehorning, but we ask that no farm personnel are in the immediate vicinity during their visit

Clinic procedures

- Our clinic will remain open, but business hours may be subject to change
- Clients will be met at the door by one of our customer care representatives
- Purchases will be set out at the door
- Laboratory samples will be received at the door

If you have experienced any Covid-like symptoms or have had exposure to someone with symptoms, we urge you to please notify us before your next vet visit so we can take the appropriate precautions.

We thank you for assistance in helping us continue to provide veterinary care while considering the health of yourselves and our staff.

Stay healthy!

