



From the Dr's desk.....Dr. Leon Roggenbuck

This month I am writing about a very important, but not very glamorous topic. The dollar is in the details! I have become painfully aware that I have wasted thousands of dollars (of my clients money) doing lab work to diagnose a problem when I should have been asking a lot more questions about the little details that make all the difference. The success of your dairy always depends on people doing the right procedure at the right time. This is a fact that applies to all of the many varied jobs on your dairy, whether we are talking about raising calves, feeding cows, milking, breeding, etc, etc.....

The first step in doing a job well is to have a proper protocol. A protocol simply defines the multiple steps that go into doing a job. We have lots of good producers with good advisors (Veterinarians, Nutritionist, Product Suppliers, Milk Coop, field personnel, etc.) on the modern dairy today. We need to all work together to define these protocols.

The next step is to communicate these protocols effectively to employees. Laminated, written protocols are the single most effective method to communicate procedures to employees. Describe protocol, show them, demonstrate, let them ask questions to enhance communication. Don't forget to define the division of labor in these protocols. Spell out exactly who does what!

The third step is to monitor for slippage. Slippage is the deviation from protocols that mysteriously happens over time. It is an absolute fact of life and we all need to be aware of it. Formal presentations to your employees can help combat slippage. We can use power point presentations to not only reiterate protocols, but also explain to employees why each step is important. Knowledgeable employees are less likely to deviate from protocols. Education is key, people need to know why we do things, allowing them to embrace tasks.

2nd Winter Meeting - We have scheduled our next "winter" meeting for **Tuesday, April 13th** at the Palms Hall. Please note that this meeting is on a Tuesday. An invitation will follow within the week with all the details. We are fortunate to have Dr. Donald Sockett DVM from the University of Wisc. Diagnostic Laboratory for our speaker. Dr. Sockett will be focusing on Dairy Calf issues including Respiratory Disease, D-Lactic Acidosis, and Septic Calves. Don has observed and worked with farmers in both the United States and Canada. He is involved in regional, national and international veterinary associations and has authored over 250 articles in lay and professional journals. He is recognized internationally for his work on infectious diseases of livestock, particularly dairy cattle. At the WVDL, he is responsible for diagnostic cases that are submitted to the laboratory by practicing veterinarians and livestock producers.

2010 Farm Tour.....It looks like our first Farm Tour was a success. If you didn't make this tour we hope to see you in the future. The tour would not have been possible without the welcome mat from the following dairies: Shaum Family Farm, Devor Dairy, Starward Farms, Lutzland Dairy, Highland Dairy, Aquila Farms, and Rene Dekker. We were generously welcomed on their dairies. We would like to thank our sponsors for helping to cover the cost of our trip: Brown Dairy Equip, Gary Martin, Fritsch Equipment, Pawlowski Construction, Kolar Construction and Keinath Tire/Midnight Madness.

Correct Tubes - Correct tubes are being discontinued by the manufacturer. If you use these tubes please discuss alternate treatment with your veterinarian.