

DAIRY VETERINARY NEWSLETTER

July 2024

AABP Issues New Guidelines for Veterinary Technicians in Bovine Practice

Recently (November 2023 - <https://extension.usu.edu/dairy/files/UtahStateDairyVetNewsletterNov2023.pdf>) the pages of this newsletter included a story regarding “the burgeoning shortage of food animal veterinarians”. One major point was that only during the last few years, there has been a marked decline in the number of new veterinary graduates entering bovine/food animal practice. In fact, AVMA data from spring 2023 showed that only 2% of graduating veterinarians entered food animal practice.

Over the last couple of years, many veterinary colleagues I know have speculated that some new type of profession/job description “like a farrier or foot trimmer” for example, will emerge to occupy the void of DVM - or equivalent - degree holding veterinarians in delivery of animal health and disease care to dairy cattle and other food animals. It is by no means a certainty that the dairy industry or regulatory requirements will insist that such work has anything to do with, or is supervised by, veterinarians. Most of us are already familiar with situations where lay personnel are performing functions that should be performed by licensed veterinarians, including some procedures regulated by state or federal laws.

In addition, a subject that is beyond the scope of this issue of the newsletter is the plethora of different kinds of “veterinary assistant”, “veterinary professional associate”, “veterinary technician specialist” and even a new type of Master’s degree program positions now being created, with various new sorts of training offered, by a number of veterinary colleges, and by at least one college that has had nothing to do with veterinary medicine before. There is also speculation that a number of veterinary colleges may be starting “veterinary nurse” training programs.

The shortage of dairy and food animal veterinarians is likely an important driving force behind the American Association of Bovine Practitioners (AABP) having recently released new “Guidelines for Credentialed Veterinary Technicians in Bovine Practice”. The 3-page document can be found at this link: https://aabp.org/resources/AABP_Guidelines/VetTech2024.pdf

The AABP document says the purpose is “- - to provide guidance on how veterinarians can broaden the delegation of tasks to credentialed veterinary technicians in bovine practice. The licensed supervising veterinarian must have a valid Veterinarian-Client-Patient Relationship (VCPR), as defined by applicable state, provincial or federal statutes. The supervising veterinarian and credentialed veterinary technician must follow the applicable state, provincial and federal rules and regulations.”

Some other key points made in the AABP guidelines are:

- Supervision means the licensed veterinarian assumes responsibility for the veterinary care delivered by the credentialed veterinary technician working under their direction.
- Direct supervision means the licensed veterinarian is readily available on the premises where the patient is located or procedures are being performed.

- Indirect supervision means the licensed veterinarian need not be on the premises where the patient is located or procedures are being performed, and must be available through electronic or other methods of communication.
- A credentialed veterinary technician has received a veterinary technician or technology degree from an accredited school, passes the Veterinary Technician National Exam (VTNE), and/or is licensed by their state or province, and receives continuing education to renew their license on the required basis.
- A veterinary technician is a graduate of an American Veterinary Medical Association Committee on Veterinary Technician Education and Activities (AVMA CVTEA®) - accredited or Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) - accredited program in veterinary technology. In most cases, the graduate is granted an associate degree or certificate.
- A veterinary technologist is a graduate of an AVMA CVTEA- or CVMA-accredited program in veterinary technology that grants a baccalaureate degree.
- A Veterinary Technician Specialist (VTS) is a veterinary technician or veterinary technologist who has completed a formal process of education, training, experience and testing through a specialty academy approved by the Committee on Veterinary Technician Specialties of the National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America.
- Generic terms such as “veterinary assistant” are sometimes used for individuals where training, knowledge and skills are less than that required for identification as a veterinary technician or veterinary technologist. The term veterinary technician should not be used to describe a veterinary assistant.

Anesthesia tasks and supervision level:

CVT Direct Supervision:

General anesthesia induction, intubation, maintenance



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CVT Indirect Supervision:

Administer epidural
 Administer local anesthesia
 Administer IV regional anesthesia
 Perform nerve blocks
 Sedate/tranquilize using controlled drugs
 Sedate/tranquilize using non-controlled drugs

Livestock management procedures and supervision level:

CVT Indirect Supervision:

Administer vaccines
 Castration by banding
 Castration by cutting
 Dehorning on animals when horns are attached to the skull (using Barnes/Keystone, etc.) dehorner
 Disbudding calves prior to horn attachment to skull by applying caustic paste or cauterizing iron
 Recommend changes to milking routine including cow prep

Rectal prolapse repair
Remove supernumerary teats

Reproduction procedures and supervision level:

Veterinarian Only:

Collect embryos non-surgically
Ovum pickup
Perform bull breeding soundness exam
Repair/replace preputial prolapse
Replace uterine prolapse
Transfer/implant fresh or frozen embryos non-surgically

CVT Indirect Supervision:

Embryo and oocyte processing including searching, staging, grading, loading, cryopreservation
Enroll animals in timed artificial insemination protocol and administer hormone injections
Perform artificial insemination
Replace vaginal prolapse and place purse-string or Buhner stitch

Surgical procedures and supervision level:

Veterinarian Only:

Cosmetic surgical dehorning
Perform surgery

CVT Direct Supervision:

Any task or procedure that requires an animal to be under general anesthesia
Suture surgical skin incisions

CVT Indirect Supervision:

Prepare surgical site using aseptic technique
Removal of sutures, drains and staples

Treatment procedures and supervision level:

Veterinarian Only:

NOTE: All treatments administered by a CVT must utilize and follow farm-specific protocols provided by the supervising veterinarian including use of DEA-controlled drugs or extralabel drug use.

Acute laceration or wound repair
Intra-articular drug administration
Joint flush
Prescribe
Prognose

CVT Direct Supervision:

Apply cast after veterinarian diagnosis
Lancing abscess
Placement of rumen trocar

CVT Indirect Supervision:

Acute and preventive hoof care
Administer euthanasia via captive bolt or gunshot
Administer fluid therapy (oral, subcutaneous, intravenous)
Administer treatments for common conditions identified in written protocols by supervising veterinarian
Apply and remove splints, bandages and wound dressings
Collect and prepare blood or blood components for transfusion

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Measure and prepare medications for dispensing to clients on order of supervising veterinarian
Perform physical therapy (hydrotherapy, post-operative care, orthopedic, neurologic)
Place and maintain intravenous catheter
Provide post-operative care
Wound aftercare after initial treatment and diagnosis by veterinarian

The longest lists of the major procedures are above, but there are some other subjects/procedures covered in the full document as well.

Mountainlands Utah Veterinary Summit October 18 - 20, 2024

More details will be forthcoming, but this serves as the first “save the date” reminder. From October 18 - 20, 2024, the Mountainlands Utah Veterinary Summit will be at the Emma Eccles Conference Center on the Utah State University campus in Logan, UT.

Please let us know your comments and suggestions for future topics. I can be reached at (435) 760-3731 (Cell), or David.Wilson@usu.edu.

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