



Herd-based Veterinary Diagnostic Service Available

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MADISON – The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) reminds dairy farmers and local farm-service professionals that veterinary diagnostic support is available to help address herd-health and production concerns.

The Herd-Based Diagnostic Program, available through DATCP’s Farm Center, serves Wisconsin dairy herds of all sizes and management types. It addresses production, milk quality, cow loss, and other concerns.

“The program utilizes production medicine diagnostic tools to focus on factors that affect overall herd performance,” said Dr. John Tracey, a DATCP veterinarian who leads the program. “Our purpose is to add to the valuable knowledge and experience of local farm service professionals to improve outcomes for the farmer, and to also help enhance local diagnostic capacity. Solving herd-level problems requires a team approach.”

To utilize the program, farmers complete an application that provides a description of the concerns to be addressed, contact information for local farm-service professionals, and a basic orientation to the farm.

Upon receipt of the application, program staff will respond, with each response tailored to address the farmer’s specific concerns. In many cases, phone or e-mail pre-visit conversations are held with the farmer and all significantly involved local farm-service providers, and a farm visit is made as soon as possible. Once on the farm, the investigative process looks at what diagnostic work has already been done by local professionals.

Throughout the process, the emphasis is on team-building and enhancing local diagnostic capacity. Farmers rely on a team of local professionals to maintain herd health, from the nutritionist to the veterinarian. The Herd-based Diagnostic Program’s assistance does not replace any one of these important players, but adds another member to the group.

At the conclusion of the analysis, a detailed report is prepared by DATCP and sent to the producer and whichever farm service professionals he or she wishes to share it with. Where follow-up testing is helpful, the program may pay local professionals to collect and submit test samples. When it is most expedient or effective, samples can be collected and submitted directly by the farmer or their local professionals to labs who work with the program. There is no charge for the laboratory tests or assistance provided by the program.

The Wisconsin Farm Center works one-on-one with Wisconsin farmers and their families during all phases of the challenging farm life cycle, including start-up, growth, change, generational succession and retirement. Besides the diagnostic program, center services include conflict mediation, energy-related issues, financial planning, counseling, transition assistance, and minority, women and veteran farmer outreach. All services are provided at no charge to the farmer and all information is kept confidential.

Requests for veterinary assistance from the Herd-Based Diagnostic Program can be initiated by contacting the Wisconsin Farm Center at 1-800-942-2474 or farmcenter@wisconsin.gov.

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