

Training veterinarians for the western Canada dairy industry

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For a veterinary college to consistently train competent dairy veterinarians, it is important to determine the skills required of them. The purpose of our research is to determine the skills that veterinarians perform alongside the skills that producers expect. Our research has two objectives:

- ▶ 1. Survey dairy veterinarians in Western Canada.
- ▶ 2. Survey dairy producers in Western Canada.

All work is carried out with the approval of the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board. So far, we have completed the survey of dairy veterinarians (objective 1). Response rate for the surveys was 39.3%. Individual animal medicine and surgery skills were performed more commonly than production medicine skills. The most important skills identified were pregnancy diagnosis by rectal palpation or ultrasound, correction of displaced abomasum, physical examination and treatment of common disorders. The survey of dairy producers (objective 2) will be carried out during summer 2012. We will send surveys to producers to determine the skills they expect of their veterinarians.

Our work will enable the Western College of Veterinary Medicine to train veterinarians with the skills needed to provide the optimal level of service to the dairy industry. This will enhance the ability of veterinarians to make a positive impact on dairy productivity and animal welfare.