

Dr. Tom Celebrates 36 Years in Vet Medicine

The dairy world has always been a part of Dr. Tom's life since he was a young child, and a decision to head down the vet track in college has led him to a 36-year career in veterinary medicine. He's planning to retire this year, but seasoned vets like Tom, are a wealth of knowledge and he'll be continuing to help transition the doctors taking over his herd healths.

"Working with the clients and getting to know them is really one of the best parts of this career," Tom said. "I've always worked to keep the client's best interest in mind and there were always teachable moments that went both ways."

The dairy industry has always been a part of Tom's life. He grew up on a farm by Marion owned and operated by his father and three uncles where they milked 250 cows. He showed cattle in 4-H and was active in FFA.

"A tidbit few may know about me is that my dad and his brothers were one of the first farms in the state of Wisconsin to put a parlor in. That was back in 1959," Tom said.

Tom worked on several farms throughout his youth as a herdsman and farm hand before deciding to be a vet. He received his undergraduate degree in animal science from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. There he met his wife, Jeanne, who also went on to become a veterinarian on the mixed animal track. Tom graduated from the University of Wisconsin School of Veterinary Medicine in 1990. He took his first job in Oconto Falls for 2 years before joining the large animal practice in Eden where he worked most of his career. We had the opportunity to have Tom here at WVS for the past four years when Country Hills merged with WVS.

"Although some of the most interesting calls were the late-night calls when a client got back from a night of bowling, those are really the ones I won't miss," Tom said.

Over the past 36 years many aspects of the dairy industry have changed, leading veterinarians to adjust.



Dr. Tom will be retiring this year after 36 years in the veterinary medicine career. He's pictured below as a young high schooler showing a senior yearling heifer named, "Susie" at the Waupaca County Fair.



"Technology with computers is certainly one of the things that I would have liked to know more of," Tom said. "Technology is changing the dairy industry, and we need to be able to adapt to the ongoing changes. We shouldn't just hang our hats on cow medicine. There's way more important things to do than individual cow medicine. While it's important to be able to help a client with a down cow, there's more value, in for example, starting a breeding program with a client."

Tom will be enjoying retirement with his wife, Jeanne, who also retires this month. They have two daughters, Cassie and son-in-law Biniam, and Anika. Jeanne has several trips planned.

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“I really need to give a big thank you to Waupun Vet Services and the partners there for the opportunity to join forces. If it weren’t for the merger in 2022, I would have been done with my vet work four years ago,” Tom said. “I really appreciate the partners and the staff. Everyone has been great to work with.”

“A huge thank you also to my clients I’ve been with for the last 30 plus years,” Tom said. “It’s been fun.”

Iowa Farm Stop Gives Insight to Feeder Prices

Last fall while I was on a hunting trip I took a pit stop to visit a 2,000-cow dairy farm in west central Iowa. The owner was also a veterinarian and his son, Chaiden Duitscher, was one of our two summer veterinary student interns last year.

I got to tour the farm, always a privilege and always enjoyable. I love learning how farms manage all the problems that arise. On this farm the grandfather was in his 80’s and he was also a veterinarian. In discussing calves, two topics came up that I wanted to share.

First, the farm provides all the feed for the calf grower, so there is never a nutrition issue and never a tendency for the grower to have a cash flow problem. Second, a different neighbor had just sold a feedlot full of Holstein cross beef. He feeds them to 1,600 lbs and 60% of the shipment went prime.

That is a testament to the excellent genetics the AI companies are providing for cross breeding beef on Holstein. Since this feedlot does one turn a year it had just refilled. The feeder wanted Holstein crosses’ again, but the price was higher than purebred beef. That’s crazy.

The tour was cut short as I received a phone call from my hunting buddies who were stuck, but it was an enjoyable time touring the farm and learning how another farm runs their operation.

Iodine 7% is Back in Stock

The gold standard for dipping navels is 7% tincture of Iodine. This product was unavailable for several years because it was being used to make methamphetamine. It has been back for some time, but I think producers were not aware that it came back. It is considered a hazmat material for shipping which increases shipping costs significantly, but we carry it at the clinic.



Bird Flu Quarantine Lifted for Area Farm

Our client that was quarantined for bird flu has had the quarantine lifted. Because there was never any indication that any animals were sick, no drop in milk, no sick animals, no indication that any animals had any sign of disease, I’m of the opinion that this strain of bird flu could easily have infected other dairy herds in the past and because we never looked for it, we never knew it existed.

That means it will probably be recognized in other herds because now the USDA is looking for it in bulk milk tanks. Minimize migratory bird contact with your dairy herd, particularly wild ducks and geese.

Sudden Dead Animals May Mean Electrocutation

Recently one of our producers found two pregnant heifers dead below a cattle brush. We’ve seen dead cattle by waterers and next to steel gates.

I have even seen dead animals next to a bunk with a chain feeding system like an old manure chain in a gutter. In all the cases it was caused by a short and the equipment wasn’t grounded enough to blow a fuse or trip a breaker.

If you see sudden dead animals with no sign of struggle, think electrocution and don’t touch anything metal. Cattle are grounded a lot better than you, wet feet standing on wet concrete. But if you have shoes with holes in them and your feet are wet, you can be toasted as well. Better to think electricity and be wrong, than be toast.