



Carrie Kohn takes on Office Manager at WVS

The Waupun Vet office staff has transitioned this year with Carrie Kohn taking on our office manager role.

Carrie has been at Waupun Vet for 16 years. During that time she has managed the clinic's blood lab, which tests for pregnancy in cows, sheep and goats.

Carrie has also been in charge of inventory over the years that she's been employed at WVS. She keeps all of the vets on top of tracking the products they use, which can be like herding cats. She will continue to do inventory for the clinic along with her office manager role. She is familiar with the inner workings of the clinic and the clients, so it's been a great transition.

Carrie has everything under control although Mark Sosalla still can't get ordering and inventory figured out, but Carrie has patience. She said 10 years of managing 100 free range chickens prepared her well for the office manager job.



Supporting Youth in Agriculture

At Waupun Veterinary Services we're happy to support our area youth involved in livestock at county fairs. WVS is the fair vet for 3 different fairs in the area this summer. Our vets walk through the fair barns checking animals every day of the fairs we cover. We also try to be present at the auctions. We bid on as many kids as we can and sometimes end up buying one or two animals. We never know what will happen when Dr. Emma is involved. Pictured above from left are Dr. Ralph, Dr. Emma and Dr. Mark at Fond du Lac County Fair this past month. As you can see Ralph and Mark are holding down Emma's hands otherwise, she has a tendency to bid against herself running the price up and giving Mark Sosalla a heart attack.

Wisconsin State Government at Work on the Farm?

Back in the 80's stray voltage was a big issue. There were lawsuits and investigations everywhere. I once sat in a meeting with a charlatan selling some kind of stray voltage system and he told the group that stray voltage would make their farm radioactive shortly. In response, the state taxed the utilities and used the money to fund an investigative veterinarian to help farmers figure out their stray voltage issues. Stray voltage isn't much of an issue anymore, and the investigative veterinarian position sits empty with no veterinarian hired.

Rather than defund the program and quit collecting money from utilities, the state DATCP is advertising for a new position for a consulting veterinarian to solve farm problems. I'm a little miffed that the state wants to provide a free service that we provide as part of our livelihood, sort of like the state building a large dairy farm and giving the milk away.

One thing about taxes on electric utilities, 100% of the costs are passed on to those of us buying electricity. Why can't the state just move on and quit collecting the fee?

Remembering Past Practices of Raising Heifers

Forty-five years ago in this part of Wisconsin, it seemed like every dairy farmer had a marsh. Every marsh was kind of fenced in and usually there was some kind of water source, either a stock tank near a fence, a stream, or a slime covered mud hole that was referred to as a pond.

Every spring the dairy farmers would haul or drive some open heifers to the marsh, dump them off, and expect them to fend for themselves. In the spring the marsh was green with all kinds of plant life and the deer and heifers would dine together on young growth. As the spring moved on to summer, the deer moved on to consume fresh young alfalfa and soybean plants.

The heifers continued to forage on rapidly aging forage, willow twigs and cattails. As it got warmer, first waves of mosquitos feasted on the heifers, then waves of deer flies and horse flies sucked blood 24 hours a day. As the water source dwindled, the heifers got a great load of internal worms from the semi pasture environment. The deer slept in hay fields and moved to breezy hilltops to avoid the bugs, getting minimal parasites because they never consumed forage growing in the vicinity of where they defecated.

Sometimes in the summer the veterinary clinic would receive a phone call that an animal was dead in the marsh from lightning. This was an entertaining process. Occasionally there would be a maggot infested hide stretched over bones. A lightning strike? Maybe four weeks ago? Occasionally there were fresh dead animals under trees within a day or two of a thunderstorm. That was lightning. The worst lightning strike I ever saw involved five dead dry cows under a loan oak. That was truly depressing.

In early fall the farmer would return to retrieve his heifers, which by now were turning wild. Remember my comment about the marsh being kind of fenced? These were the times I was glad we didn't have a tranquilizer gun in the clinic. If you travel to western Wisconsin and drive through the hills, you get to see beautiful corral systems with loading chutes. I never saw anything like that in any marsh I was supposed to rope a wild heifer in. I remember a dry cow that was killed on Highway 26 in front of Randy and Tom Hollanders. The county sheriff didn't believe Randy when he claimed he didn't own the cow, but he didn't. The cow had a red tag in it. Every animal on Randy's farm had a yellow tag manufactured by another company, and Randy wasn't going to lie.

I did discover whose animal it was a few days later by using the tag. The farm it came from checked their dry cows in the marsh and the red tag numbered cow was missing. The best part of this story is that in the fall when the dairyman finally got his heifers home, he found that the 700-pound heifers he put in the marsh in the spring were now 600 pounds.

Farms are Under the Microscope of Milk Plants

Last week I was talking with a consultant that had a producer lose his milk plant, or rather the milk plant didn't want his milk.

After calling 25 plants, he found a plant willing to accept his milk. I didn't ask about trucking costs. I've mentioned this before, but milk has traditionally been a commodity like corn or gold. The organic milk crowd totally rebranded their milk and separated it in the dairy section. Now, the branding of milk is coming from a different direction.

More and more cheese and other dairy plants have the option of NOT picking up a producer's milk and producers need to be very cognizant of every factor that influences that milk plant's decision, right down to how clean the farm looks when you drive in the yard. Perception is reality from the consumer's perspective. Every aspect of your farm is under the microscope. It's not just the milk quality measurements, or the antibiotic tests run on bulk milk. It's certification of how you handle your animals and how you feed them and handle your manure.

It used to be your farm and you sold onto a truck with all your neighbors. It's becoming the consumers' farm and you are managing it according to the consumers' desires. Keep this concept in the back of your mind with every decision you make. Assume everything is being filmed and the film is shown at the grocery store. You don't have to like this, but it is the consumer's reality.

We Need Your Email Address!

The office is updating all client's information and will be including email addresses. Please fill out the slip with your email and return with your payment.

Vet Looking for Country Home

One of our young vets is looking to rent a home in the country.

Must allow a well-trained dog. Allowing chickens would be a big plus.

Contact the vet clinic if you have an available home to rent.