

Volume 2 | Spring 2019

Inside *Proventus*

***FIVE HABITS OF
HIGHLY EFFECTIVE
FARMS***

***Growing Need for Human
Resources on Farm***

**CALF HEALTH:
LESSONS LEARNED FROM MONITORING
THE CRITICAL POINTS
IN CALF REARING**



FOUNDED BY FARMERS, FOR FARMERS



WORKING WITH PRODUCERS ACROSS CANADA TO CREATE, MONITOR AND ACHIEVE FARM GOALS FOR A PROGRESSIVE FARM FUTURE.

Learning about Proventus

Proventus is an all-encompassing, unbiased consultancy company that works with dairy and beef farmers in Canada. We are farmer founded and farmer owned, meaning that all advice related to the farming business is from certified, expert advisors that collaborate together in order to help you achieve your goals. Proventus works to ensure all parties on the farm can work together (accountants, financial advisors, bankers, veterinarians, nutritionists, and others) in order to create one unified plan to grow and progress your farm, or assist in specific issues. The goal of Inside *Proventus* is to provide farmers access to different dairy and beef information, programs, initiatives, and take-home messages to help you implement on farm. All articles are provided by our advisors, or (when stated) guest writers in the industry who provide important services to our industry.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

the editor



Kassie Jansen

In this issue of Inside *Proventus*, our theme is focused on improving your farm through prevention.

In articles written by Proventus advisors, we explore different calf management programs for both dairy and beef herds: how to monitor and improve the health of your calves, as well as prevent disease.

We also hear from some of our Ontario animal health advisors on the disease Salmonella Dublin and the devastating effects it can have if not properly prevented, as well as information on vaccines and the importance of implementing a program on farm.

In articles written by some of our BC advisors, we talk about highly effective farms, and informational points you can use to increase your success, as well as touch base on the growing need for human resources—focusing on employee retention.

Lastly, MNP writes about strategic thinking on the family farm, and our featured guest from CanWest DHI chats about the value of milk recording.

We hope you enjoy this issue of Inside *Proventus*.

07

Preventing Neonatal Disease in Beef Calves

Beef Calf Management

Dr. Tom Daborn and Dr. Travis Marfleet write about proper calf management, protocol implementation, and how to prevent disease in our beef herds when they are the most vulnerable.



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17

Importance of Vaccination in Dairy Herds

Learning about Vaccines

Dr. Thomas Veens from Heartland Veterinary Clinic talks about preventing disease through vaccination in dairy herds and vaccine program considerations for the dairy herd.

- 03 S.M.A.R.T GOALS**
How to create goals that will help you for the future
- 05 FIVE HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE FARMS**
Dr. Lisa McCrea explains how farms can adapt and thrive in our changing industry
- 07 PREVENTION: NEONATAL DISEASE IN BEEF CALVES**
- 11 PREVENTION: SALMONELLA DUBLIN**
Dr. Kristen Edwards talks about how to prevent this devastating disease
- 12 HOW DOES XLVETS BENEFIT CANADIAN FARMERS?**
President of XLVets Canada, Dr. Brent Fawcett explains how Canadian farmers can benefit from XLVets
- 13 FULFILLING THE GROWING NEED FOR HUMAN RESOURCES**
Teresa Born on HR: how to retain employees on farm
- 15 MONITORING DAIRY CALVES**
Dr. Ben Potvin shares the lessons learned in monitoring the critical points in calf rearing
- 17 IMPORTANCE OF VACCINATION IN DAIRY HERDS**
- 19 VALUE OF MILK RECORDING**
Guest writer, Natalie Walt from CanWest DHI explains the value of milk recording
- 21 REDEFINING STRATEGIC THINKING ON THE FAMILY FARM**
With MNP advisor, Bob Tosh

FIVE HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE FARMS

Dairy farms all over the world have continued to progress and be passed down from one generation to the next. As time goes on, market sensitivities, consumer and regulatory requirements, labour availability, farm demographics, and technological advancements all place higher demands on our Dairy community. Despite these pressures, successful farms have found a way to adapt and thrive. Top performing dairy farms have the distinct ability to step back and objectively assess their businesses



Dr. Lisa McCrea, DVM
Proventus Animal Health Advisor
Agwest Veterinary Group Ltd.



and themselves. They are constantly doing a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) of the business and conditions, and fine-tuning strategies to adapt or adjust to the circumstances.

American author Stephen Covey wrote a bestselling book over 25 years ago titled "7 Habits of Highly Effective People" which has become a timeless influential handbook for successful people, and still provides relevance today. This article highlights key habits that the most effective farmers practice every day.

Habit 1: Be Proactive

Being Proactive is a state of mind and at the core of highly effective farmers. By concentrating on their circle of influence and choosing how they respond to circumstances they have no control over, proactive farmers are able to change the nature of the results. Traditionally our fathers and grandfathers ran their dairy farm in a REACTIVE manner, being affected by the external environment around them, waiting until there was a problem and then dealing with it. Today, farmers are learning to be PROACTIVE, making decisions based on their core values. They rapidly anticipate and identify problems as they rise, and in some cases before they arise, making the appropriate adjustments to minimize the negative effects. A farm may not be able to control whether its forage is too high in potassium or too low in energy due to weather conditions when making it, however a proactive farm will recognize its forage limitations and make the necessary adjustments without waiting for the cows to get milk fever or ketosis.

Habit 2: Realizing a Purpose for Your Business

Successful dairy farms have taken the time to think about not only what they do, but why they do it. Having a clear mission (reason for existing), vision (future goals), and core values for your farm will allow everyone on the farm to work more cohesively, and move in the same direction, towards a common goal. A farm's values guide every decision it makes and encompasses its purpose for farming. Before dairy farms can truly be successful, they must first establish their core values and beliefs that make their farm unique. Common characteristics of progressive farms include: Proactive, Innovative, Cow-focused, Efficient, Passionate, Accountability and Integrity.

Habit 3: Begin with the End in Mind

All things are created twice, first in theory and then in reality. Goal oriented farms always have the end in mind, with a clear vision of where they are going and how they are going to get there. They know where the farm be in 5, 10, and 15 years from now, who will be running it, how big the farm will be, and have even defined clear goals to achieve.

Progressive dairy farms take the time to make sure everyone on the farm has a clear understanding of the vision, and ensures that each employee feels apart of the team.

Habit 4: Prioritize and Manage

Progressive farmers are excellent at prioritizing and managing their operations. Studies show that the most sustained success comes from doing 20 things 5 percent better,



Von Hardenberg Farms,
Dewdney, B.C.

rather than doing one thing 100 percent better. The most successful farms can manage the day to day tasks and pay attention to all the details, which allows them to achieve their goals. These farms possess an attitude of excellence and concentrate on doing the little things better. There are standardized protocols in place for key areas of the farm, such as milking routine, calf feeding, and reproduction. The most productive farms can transfer both passion and attention to detail to its employees through coaching and mentorship.

As time moves on and different opportunities arise, whether it is to build a new barn, buy more

cows, or purchase a new tractor, successful farmers step back and ask the question "Is this in line with my purpose, vision and goals for my farm?" This removes the old impulsive way of doing business. They also manage risk by evaluating "but-what-if" scenarios and have contingency plans and processes in place. "What if" the interest rate goes up, the price of milk drops, supply management disappears? By asking the tough and uncomfortable questions, progressive farms can identify the weaknesses in their business. These farms intend to succeed and are confident in their plan, but still have an alternate plan just in case.

different areas of the farm against its performance goals can highlight things that the farm needs to stop doing in order to become more profitable. For instance, if a farm is under staffed and puts in poor crops year after year, perhaps they would be better off concentrating on milking cows and have a custom operator do the crops.

These 5 elements of highly effective farmers are called Habits for a reason. They are challenging and need to be practiced every day. You will need to place the right employees in key areas on farm (calves, parlor, breeding, and feeding) and give them the tools, support and knowledge to succeed. The 5 habits can be best achieved when you surround your farm with the key advisors that can help you reach your goals.

Pro-Active
Innovative
Cow-Focused
Efficient
Passionate
Accountability
Integrity

Habit 5: Benchmark and Analyze Your Performance

It's not enough to know how you compare to the average farmer, but rather how you stack up against the top 25 percent. Progressive farms set performance goals and review them often. They take all the technological advancements and use these tools to monitor their farm and make necessary adjustments along the way in order to benchmark their performance. Analysing the

"We are what we repeatedly do.
Excellence, then, is not an act,
it's a habit".

- Aristotle

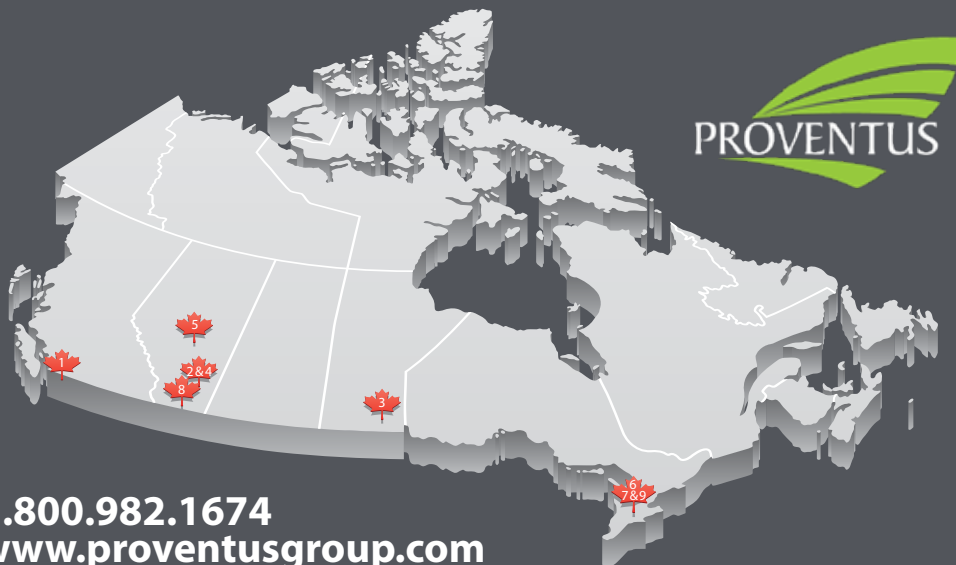
INNOVATION THROUGH COLLABORATION



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XLVets Canada works together in order to service Proventus as industry leading animal health consultants. Proventus has veterinarians across Canada joining XLVets to be of service to dairy and beef producers nationwide:

- 1 Agwest Veterinary Group
- 2 Bow Valley Veterinary Clinic
- 3 Beausejour Animal Hospital
- 4 Bow Valley Livestock Health
- 5 Gull Lake Veterinary Services
- 6 Heartland Veterinary Clinic
- 7 Kirkton Bovine Services
- 8 Livestock Veterinary Services
- 9 Tavistock Veterinarians