



In September 2000, The School of Veterinary Medicine purchased a 51 cow Wisconsin dairy herd and moved it to the School's Charmany Facility in Madison. The herd was purchased to provide veterinary and pre-veterinary students learning opportunities and experience with a working dairy operation. Specific goals are to provide students more animal handling experience, make them more comfortable on farm, and more aware of their future client's management needs.



"This program will have a significant impact on student's lives as they make career decisions" says Dr. W. Goodger. "Every day I see students learning and growing through their involvement in the herd".

Student labor is responsible for the majority of the daily operations and care of the herd. Overall herd operations are managed via a herdsman and management team. Students

are directly involved in management teams responsible for administering and monitoring herd vaccinations, calf care, Ovsynch, AAIMS, and daily sick cow treatment and monitoring.



Students working in the barn learn, experience and make decisions regarding:

- Animal handling including milking
- Feed delivery and feed monitoring
- Milk Quality and Food Safety
- Sick cow diagnosis and treatment

They become more comfortable working on dairy facilities, have more confidence handling dairy cattle and are better prepared to function in 4th year clinics/rotations. Students are responsible for 75% of the herd activities.

The herd is used in 16 different School of Veterinary Medicine courses for 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th year students. Courses include:

- Diagnostic / PE labs
- Restraint Lab
- Therio palpation labs and rotations
- Bacteriology Lab
- GI Diagnostics Lab

- Hoof Trimming Lab
- Urinary Lab
- Cardiology Lab
- Production Medicine Rotations
- Independent Student Study Projects



In addition, herd management for disease diagnosis, reproduction, and production are directly involved with the following SVM laboratories and teaching units:

- LAIM-sick cow diagnosis and treatment
- LAS-sick cow surgery
- Theriogenology-reproductive management
- Clinical Pathology-laboratory services for disease diagnosis



Through the student Bovine Club the herd also provides supplemental wet labs including:

- Palpation
- Hoof trimming
- Dairy Cattle Judging



The herd also has hosted:

- Continuing education courses for ultrasound and milk sampling
- Middle school tours coordinated and run by veterinary student barn workers



Here's what some of our students are saying about their experiences in the herd:

- Carmi - "My career interests are both large and small animal medicine right now. When I first started school, I was very much a small animal oriented girl, but the more I work with cows, the more I am leaning toward becoming a large animal practitioner."
- Pam - "I got the job just to be able to have the experience. I had NO idea I would like it so much that it would totally reverse my veterinary plans. I had no previous interest in large animal medicine before starting here last fall."
- Jessica - "I always wanted to be a dairy practitioner working in a mixed animal practice. I grew up on a farm with all kinds of animals, and I really have a strong appreciation of that kind of lifestyle. The time I spend at Charmany just makes it more obvious to me that those goals haven't changed a bit. In fact, I'm more determined than ever to be a cow vet when I grow up."
- Stacia - "...not only is milking at Charmany teaching me some basic skills required for veterinary medicine, it is also helping me learn about the difficulties of herd health that dairy farmers have to deal with, making me better able to understand the situation they are in and what needs to be done to improve it."
- Lisa - "I feel much more comfortable around cows. When farmers ask me if I have ever milked a cow, I can say yes. I think the experience I have gained will be valuable when I start clinics."
- Jon - "I think I will be able to gain clients respect faster because of the experience I have had with the herd."

If you are interested in gaining experience working with dairy cows, we have the opportunity for you! You can join the milking crew at the Charmany Teaching Facility and work the AM or PM milking shifts. Weekday shifts are from 5:00 am to 7:00 am and from 4:30 pm to 8:30 pm. Weekend shifts are from 5:00 am to 12:00 pm or 7:00 am to 12:00 pm and from 4:30 pm to 8:30 pm. (\$7.00 / hour).

Interested students should contact Dr. Bill Goodger at 608-770-1448 or email wgoodger@facstaff.wisc.edu.



For more information:

SVM Web Site:

www.vetmed.wisc.edu

Food Animal Production Medicine Web Site:

www.vetmed.wisc.edu/dms/fapm/index.html