



League of Large Animal Medical Advocates

A Community Effort to Resolve the Lack of Large Animal
Veterinary Care in Hancock County

Minutes
Inaugural Meeting
Wed., Aug 22, 2007
5:30 pm – 7:00 pm
Ellsworth Public Library

Review & Approval of Agenda:

I	Welcome	5 min.	5:30
II	Questionnaire	10 min.	5:35
III	Review of Current Situation	5 min.	5:45
IV.	Brainstorming Session	35 min.	5:50
V.	Recap & Action Plan	30 min.	6:25
VI.	Next Meeting	5 min	6:55
VII	Adjourn		7:00 PM

I. Welcome

No Official "Sign in" taken at first meeting, 43 people in attendance, all very welcome.

II. Questionnaire

Everyone present was given a brief questionnaire re: their veterinary needs. Additional copies of the questionnaire (updated to reflect comments from group) are available by downloading the attached document (see below). Post-meeting addendum: results from questionnaire revealed that those present (43 total) represented

- a. 17 different towns, including 2 outside of Hancock County.
- b. Those present represented over 75 horses, nearly 50 sheep, 15 alpacas, 7 goats, 6 llamas, 6 cattle, 2 donkeys and 1 pig.
- c. Many noted plans for their livestock numbers to increase in the near future.
- d. A little over half state they have a vet for regular care, most must truck their animals to the vet.
- e. Of those who have a vet for regular care, a little over half have no vet for emergency care.
- f. A little under half of all those present have no vet whatsoever for either regular or emergency care.
- g. For those with a vet, a little over half must truck to the vet.
- h. Vets used come from Ellsworth (no new clients accepted), Winterport (requires trucking to the vet) or Canada.
- i. Many expressed a willingness to help other animal owners with emergency care or emergency trucking. A system to coordinate this info is under way.
- j. Many of those present feel extremely comfortable with basic first aid.
- k. Almost all were interested in contracting with a new vet if one moved into the area.

Addendum: As point of information to the community,

- a. Blake Veterinary in Northport has added a large animal veterinarian who makes farm calls. They (Dr. Sarah Slater) will be in the area on Thursday, September 27th. Phone: 338-8300/8302, website: <http://www.myvetonline.com/website/blakevethospital/?php-pending=false>
- b. Ridge Runner Veterinary in Winterport has added a new large animal vet who does farm calls. Phone: 207-223-2596.

III. Review of Current Situation

It is clear to all that large animal vets are desperately needed in this area. Concerns noted over difficulty in loading a severely wounded or ill animal to seek emergency care. Concerns voiced that owners are not willing to pay what it costs to have a large animal vet make farm calls.

IV. Brainstorming Session

For the sake of clarity, I have grouped the ideas presented into related categories

- a. Recruitment
 1. E-mail vet hospitals/schools for grads
 2. Send info on quality of life in downeast Maine
 3. enlist help from the ME Dept. of Agriculture & UMO Extension
 4. has to be the "right" person
 5. need an experienced vet
- b. Obstacles
 1. new vets can't afford to start practice
 2. malpractice insurance rates
 3. large animal practice harder than small animals
 4. not much \$ in large animal care
 5. emotional stress/burnout
 6. good care costs \$\$, must be prepared to pay
- c. Legislation
 1. several Bills in Congress, HR 1367 & others
 2. loan forgiveness for rural vets
 3. grants available as well
- d. Long Range Solutions
 1. "parsonage" system
 2. Bucksport Rd. barn offered space for living & practice
 3. Hancock barn offered space for living & practice (post meeting)
 4. recruit students to go to vet school (4H, High school, UMO Extension)
 5. found vet school in ME or greater New England area
- e. Immediate Solutions
 1. Seminar Series
 2. Educate owners: cut down on non-emergency vet contact
 3. enlist community support (co-op?)
 4. have local owners teach & share knowledge w/others
 5. pool together to get vet care; shots clinics, etc.
 6. Appoint Delegate to ME Farm Bureau Meetings in Augusta
 7. Found Yahoo Group
- f. Other
 1. Homeopathic Solutions: Edee Howland, PO Box 94, Little Deer Isle, Maine, office in Blue Hill. Phone: 374-8990
 2. Use UMO barn vets in emergency?? Vaccination clinics??, contact Dr. Robert Caust

3. Note of Aug 30th, 7pm meeting at Boggy Brook to close UME Extension office. *Post meeting note: Meeting was in re" to closing FSA office within extension building. Notes sent in e-mail previous.
4. Dr. Robert Arnott, 506-328-2142, New Brunswick
5. Contact Dean Ashwood
6. Contact ME Farm Bureau Lobby, John Olsen
7. ME Farm Bureau Newsletter available w/ \$50/year membership
8. compile contact info on legislators

V. Recap & Action Plan

Volunteers signed up for various tasks above, HMZ will contact individually. HMZ will also contact local vets for further info.

VI. Next Meeting: Post meeting set for **Tuesday, September 25th, 5:30 pm, Ellsworth Public Library**

VII. Adjourn 7 pm