

North Star Veterinary Services Newsletter January 2020

With the New Year, comes the implementation of FARM 4.0, a new set of standards from the FARM program that will affect the majority of dairy farms with milk co-ops in compliance with the FARM program. Many of you have expressed concerns or have had questions about the new rules and guidelines, so this newsletter will help start to answer some of those questions. Additionally, know that we are dedicated to helping you understand and meet these requirements, and are making it North Star Vets' new year's resolution to make sure all farms we have a written veterinary-client-patient-relationship with are confident in their herd health plans moving forward.

I know that some of the changes that are coming along with the FARM program seem daunting and frustrating to implement. We certainly understand those feelings. I will say that the guidelines are carefully discussed and written by a group of people comprised of farmers, bovine veterinarians, and animal scientists. They are people with the goal of protecting the dairy industry at the forefront of their minds. I think we can all agree that maintaining excellent cow welfare/health is a priority for all of us, and programs like FARM are created to provide guidelines on how to do this. While some of these guidelines may seem difficult to achieve, we hope to help you use them as a chance to create herd health plans and protocols that promote optimal cow health and welfare as well as sustainable milk market.

This is a list of requirements that are absolutely necessary under FARM 4.0. (Note: some of these requirements are new, some have changed an increased level of consequence, and some were already required):

Requirement	Status	How we can help
Written Veterinarian Client Patient Relationship (VCPR) renewed annually	No change from previous version of FARM	Signing a VCPR with us means that we are at your facility at least once a year in order to best advise you about the health and welfare of your animals, that we will be available for routine and emergency care as needed, that you will utilize us for veterinary care and advise regarding your animals, and that we both will keep adequate records of animals that we treat on your farm.
The written herd health plan is reviewed annually by the vet of record	New standard	It is now required that as your veterinarian of record, we will need to completely review your herd health plan with you. This written plan can come as the filled in documents provided in your FARM binders, or a set of written protocols that we discuss together. Once we discuss your herd health plan, we offer that we will type up the protocols and print them for you in a binder that we provide so that your herd health plan is all in one place.
Specific written protocols are required for everyone <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fitness to transport • Pre-weaned calf management (Movement, colostrum feeding, access to water, milk feedings, starter feed, dehorning) • Care of down cows 	Mostly new standard has increased in level of consequence. Now if these protocols are not present, a Mandatory Corrective Action Plan (MCAP) will be put in place)- meaning you will have 9 months to correct failures or be placed on	We can discuss these protocols with you, write them and include provide them to you in a farm-specific protocol binder, and provide training in any of these areas for farm staff

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On farm euthanasia 	Probation if the requirements are not met	
Tail docking is not allowed	Has not been allowed, but now if seen results in immediate probation	Can discuss alternatives to help with cleanliness.
All animals (including pre-weaned calves) have access to clean water at all times	Increased in level of consequence. MCAP if not met.	Can discuss requirements/make recommendations.
All animals have access to sufficient feed.	Increased in level of consequence. MCAP if not met.	Can discuss requirements/make recommendations.
Calves need to be dehorned before 8 weeks of age.	Increased in level of consequence. MCAP if not met.	Can discuss requirements/make recommendations, and provide training in techniques.
Proper calf management- moving calves, colostrum, and feeding	New standard to actually assess what is being done. MCAP if not met.	Can discuss requirements/make recommendations, and provide training in techniques.
Proper down cow management- movements, medical care, constant access to feed, water, and shelter	New standard to actually assess what is being done. MCAP if not met.	Can discuss requirements/make recommendations, and provide training in techniques.
Proper euthanasia protocol is followed.	New standard to actually assess what is being done. MCAP if not met.	Can discuss requirements/make recommendations, and provide training in techniques.
Training for nonfamily labor in stockmanship, calf management, down cow management, euthanasia, and determining fitness for transport	Some new standards, others increased in level of consequence. MCAP if not met.	Can do training sessions in all of these categories for farm staff.

Additionally, note that the following requirements have increased in consequence if not met, but are not yet at the consequence level of MCAP.

- Pain control for dehorning
- Accurate record keeping for all drug use, including animal ID, reason for use, dose and route of administration, and when their withhold will be up
- Protocols and veterinary oversight for use of over the counter drugs such as oxytetracycline (LA 100, 200 etc) and penicillin

Over the next several weeks, we will be going through all of this with you after herd checks. We will answer any questions you may have, and make sure that you have a written herd health plan that meets these standards.

Note: To account for increasing costs - all stop charges will be increased by \$10. For example, the standard \$25 charge will now be increasing to \$35.

The hours for our weekday after hours charge will be changing to from 3pm-9pm to 1pm-9pm. This means that calls that come in after 1PM for emergencies or sick animals that need to be seen that same day will incur an additional \$25 fee.

Additionally, with the New Year all of our drug vendors will have annual increase in drug charges which may be reflected in our drug charges.

Happy new year to you all!