



SVMA ~ SK Agriculture
**Veterinary Student
Mentorship Program**



GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS AND MENTORING PRACTITIONERS

Goals of the program:

To ensure adequate veterinary service is available in the future to serve Saskatchewan's expanding livestock production sector.

Objective of the program:

To introduce first and second year Saskatchewan quota students to veterinary practices in Saskatchewan serving a high percentage of livestock clients.

Planned outcomes:

By providing first and second year students an agriculture based practice experience that showcases this career path in a positive manner and by demonstrating the range of both professional and lifestyle options to be found in the agri-food sector in rural Saskatchewan, our hope is the mentorship program will encourage students to seriously consider food animal or mixed practice as an attractive career option.

By exposing veterinary students with little-to-no experience with agriculture or livestock to the modern concepts used in livestock production, the hope is that some early experience and association with people in those industries will influence students to choose electives in their third and fourth years of study that will prepare them for rural food animal practice.

Veterinarians from different types of practice may do things, see things and think about things in different ways. Individual livestock producers and other clients are equally as diverse in their ways of handling livestock and managing their production units. Exposing students to food animal practice from many points of view is one of the strengths of the mentorship program.

Terms and Conditions:

1. Practices will be responsible for providing mentorship and support to the student for a minimum of fourteen (14) weeks during the period commencing early in May of the program year.
2. Financial support provided by the practice must be either cash or a combination of cash and in-kind contributions that equals at least \$3,000 over and above the \$6,500 provided by the Ministry of Agriculture and the SVMA for the 14 week period. Practices may provide financial support above the \$3,000 minimum.
3. In-kind contributions such as suitable living accommodations, board and room or travel support, to a maximum of \$1,500 for the 14 week period, are allowed. Other in kind contributions made by the mentoring practice should be discussed with the SVMA prior to the start of the summer program.
4. The SVMA will provide each mentoring practice with three payments over the summer: of \$2,000 at the end of May, \$2000 at the end of June and \$2500 at the end of July.
5. While the 14 week mentorship period normally extends into August, **there is no wage support paid beyond the end of July.** Students and practices need to know they will receive wage support payments only three (3) times over the 14-week period.

6. Mentoring practices are to use the funds provided by the SVMA as part of the wages paid to the student. Standard deductions shall be made from the student's gross wages: the workers compensation program is mandatory. Disability and other insurance is the responsibility of the student.
7. Mentorship students are required to keep a log of their activities over the summer and to submit three reports to the SVMA registrar regarding their activities. Reports can be emailed to sgauthier@svma.sk.ca or faxed to 306.975.0623.
 - The first report is due by the end of May
 - The second report is due by the end of June

The first two reports must be received by the SVMA office for the final cheque to be issued.

 - A final report that includes completion of a questionnaire provided by the SVMA office is to be submitted by the end of August.
8. A student can spend the 14-week mentorship period in more than one mentoring practice. This must be determined before April 1 of the program year, with any agreements with other practices already in place.

The Mentor's role:

1. Expose the (usually first or second year) student to the business of animal agriculture and food animal practice over the 14 weeks they will be involved in the mentorship program.
2. Allow the mentorship student to see every facet of the practice:
 - a. the day-to-day activities of a practitioner dealing with animals
 - b. the demographics and geography of the practice

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ client and species statistics ▪ staffing ▪ work loads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ seasonal caseloads ▪ practice history ▪ issues unique to the specific practice
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 - c. commercial aspects of practice

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ fees ▪ billing practices ▪ sales practices and markups ▪ how the practice interacts with pharmaceutical companies and representatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ drug inventories ▪ dispensing protocols ▪ staff salaries
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 - d. the practice's philosophy regarding the use of technologists:
The mentor should encourage technical and lay staff to act as mentors as well.
This is an opportunity for the staff to demonstrate their roles in the practice.
3. Mentors should strive to instill confidence in the student regarding their increase in knowledge and understanding related to food animal production practises and the business of raising livestock as the summer progresses.
4. Mentors should determine the "comfort level" the student has in dealing with producers and their animals within the first few days of employment. Some students have a great deal of experience in this area; others may have had little or no exposure to either.
5. Work from the perspective that this student could potentially become a new associate who would then be dealing with your clients after joining the practice. New associates make better impressions on clients if they can demonstrate a reasonable level of familiarity with the principles and the language associated with the various livestock sectors.
6. Discuss the client base of the practice, from hobby farms to intensive livestock production operations, the various skill and knowledge levels regarding animal husbandry, the clients' acceptance and use of modern or innovative production practices.

7. Discuss your practice's herd health and companion animal health protocols:
 - vaccination programs
 - spring processing of cows and calves
 - fall processing of feeders
8. Review the practice fee schedule and discuss how and when these are set. Also discuss the use of cost estimates for work done with both livestock and companion animals.
9. Have the student perform an audit on the medical records kept by the practice with reference to the SVMA Practice Standards.
10. Discuss biosecurity both on farm and in the clinic.
11. Discuss emergency preparedness and response plans using civic and animal disease situations.
12. Discuss animal welfare issues including dealing with suspected cases of animal abuse.

External experiences:

Producers may allow student participation without mentoring supervisor to be present at certain times:

- Try to get the student involved in any suitable feedlot activity. Spending a day at a feedlot with the manager, pen checker, processors, those dealing with the sick pen, or the person selecting animals that are "finished" and ready to market, would be an educational experience well worth the time.
- Assist with branding and processing of cattle prior to being turned out to summer pastures.
- Visit a community pasture to assist in intakes, sorting, moving; or spend time with a pasture rider.
- Visit the diagnostic labs to follow-up on submissions from individual cases submitted by the practice.
- Visit nearby game farms, riding stables, PMU farms and local abattoirs, where possible, to broaden the student's exposure to the various livestock sectors.

Flexibility:

It may be possible for mentorship students to spend a short period of time (a few days or longer) in another mentoring practice. This would have to be agreed upon by all parties. Allowing students maximum exposure to the many and varied aspects of the livestock industry and different practice styles can add to the value of the mentorship program. The program can be as flexible as necessary as long as the student is being truly mentored in the art and science of mixed or large animal practice.