

Developing an Animal Health & Livestock Management Plan

I. Why Develop a Livestock Management Plan?

1. Owners' Recordkeeping, Planning Guide, Historical Reference
2. Employee Instructions and Training & Transparency of Information for Auditors/Assessors
3. Production Goals: Set Yearly Benchmarks and Evaluations
4. Financial: Make Business Decisions that Decrease Inputs
5. Holism: Look at Your Farm as a System, Rather than as Individual Enterprises
6. Continually Improve Health and Welfare of Animals & Catch Illnesses/Injuries More Quickly

II. What Is a Livestock Management Plan?

Farm Plan + Animal Health Plan

1. Review on an Annual Basis, Perhaps Even With Your Veterinarian or NRCS/Agricultural Extension Agent
2. Tailor It to Your Needs So It is Useful and Used

III. What Should be Included in a Livestock Management Plan?

A. Farm Plan:

1. Type of Operation
2. Goals, Mission
3. Employees/Family Members with Responsibilities
4. Farm & Building Description
5. Soil & Water Testing and Characteristics
6. Weather: Norms & Abnorms
7. Emergency Plan: Weather Disaster (extended freeze, flood, fire, tornado), Drought, Disease Outbreak

B. Biosecurity Program: Protecting Your Herd from Introduced Pathogens from Off the Farm

1. Closed vs. Open Herd
2. Bringing New Animals to the Farm (Testing & Quarantine: BVD, BLV, Johnes, TB, Brucellosis, Trichomonosis)
3. Bringing Animals Back Home from Shows or Stud Services (Disease Testing & Quarantine Procedure)
4. Rodent Control
5. Wildlife
6. Visitors (Farriers, Veterinarians, Livestock Haulers, Hay Haulers, Delivery Vehicles including UPS, Propane and Fuel Trucks, Utility Repair Trucks, Windmill/Well Repairmen, Neighbors, Ag Extension or NRCS Agents, Animal Health Inspector, Employees). Consider all the possible sources of contamination from tires and passengers within vehicles whose boots, coveralls or overcoats may have come into contact with infected animals or contaminated soil, manure or feed. Develop a plan to address these issues in event of disease outbreak in your area.

C. Pasture/Range/Paddocks/Arables

1. Fencing: Bordering Farms
2. Shared Water Sources & Drainages
3. Composition/Content: Monitor Health & Quantity of Soil Microbial Life (Historical Records of Tests)
4. Nutrient Management Program: Soil and Animal Mineral Supplementation
5. Crop Rotation
6. Grazing Rotation
7. Maintenance Program and Monitoring
8. Animal Fixtures: Cross-fencing, Waters, Feeders
9. Predator Monitoring and Management Plan

D. Animal Health Plan • Planning For Positive Health

1. What Diseases are Issue on Your Farm?
2. What can You do to Control/Prevent them?

3. What can You do to Maintain Health & Welfare of the Animals?
4. What can You do to Improve the Health & Welfare of the Animals?
5. Identify Deficiencies on Your Farm (Lack of Cross-fencing, Inadequate Sources of Water, Dilapidated Structures or Pens in Need of Repair, Poor Quality Pastures--Low in Organic Matter from Overgrazing or Over-chemicalization; and Develop a 5-Year Improvement Plan Including Yearly Budgets and Goals).
6. Address Nutritional Deficiencies in Your Livestock with a Supplementation Program
7. Determine Your Known Risks (Is Your Farm in a Wildlife Migratory Zone? Are there Factory Farms, Feedlots, or Other High Concentrations of Animals Near Enough to Present Danger of Airborne or Waterborne Disease Threat to Your Herd? Have You or Your Neighbors Experienced Death Loss Due to Virus, Soil-borne Bacterial Disease or Predation? Do You have a Neighbor that Rotates in New Stock?)
8. Document Routine Animal & Feed Handling Procedures
9. Document Routine Vaccination, Castration and Other Medical Procedures (dates/products/amounts administered, reason for administration, results)
10. Document Parasite Control Program (Internal & External)
11. Document the Animals on Farm (Age/Category/Stage of Production)
12. Document any Feeding Program in Operation
13. Document Provisions for Water
14. Post Contact Information for Your Veterinarian, AI Technician, Hoof Trimmer, Extension Agent and Other Professionals You Use so they are Available for Employees and Other Persons in Contact with Your Livestock in Event of Emergency.
15. Document Sick & Injured Animal Care Procedures (Referencing Written Information Will Help in Emergency When You are Not Thinking Clearly, and Will Help Employees if You are Not There.)
16. Encourage Natural Behaviors in Your Herd by Providing Adequate Space and Nutrition
17. Adjust Stocking Densities to Encourage Pasture Health
18. Monitor Pasture Health (NIRS Testing, Forage Height & Density Measurements, Organic Matter Visual Assessment, Animal Condition Score, Forage Species Counts, Rainfall/Wind Speed/Temperature Records, Calculate Percentage of Exposed Soil vs. Vegetative Cover and Manage for Increase in Cover)
19. Adjust Animal Supplementation According to Body Condition Score, Stage of Production and Season.
20. Evaluate Pen Design for Low Stress (Eliminate Visual Distractions that Cause Balking, Reduce Noise by Greasing and Maintaining Gates & Handling Facilities, Redesign Slamming Features, Provide for Firm Footing, Reduce Wide Areas that Encourage Milling down to Clear, Curved, and Narrow Passages that Encourage Forward Flow)
21. Educate All Handlers About Animal Behavior
 Temple Grandin <http://www.grandin.com/references/new.corral.html>
 Bud Williams <http://managingwholes.com/--low-stress-livestock.htm>
22. Address Thermal Challenges
23. Document Reproduction/Fertility Targets (Develop a Program to Address Infertility)
24. Establish Euthanasia and Culling Protocols and Records

IV. Livestock Management Plan Summary

Look at Your System as a Whole (Stakeholders, Employees, Soil Nutrient Cycle, Water Cycle, Plant & Wildlife Community, Livestock Herd, Neighboring Properties, Financial Resources, Weather/Rainfall)
 Are the Management Decisions You Make Moving You Toward Your Goal?
[Essence of Holistic Management.pdf](#)