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If James Herriot of PBS's "All Creatures Great and Small" is your idea of a country vet, Cedar Grove veterinarian Michael Demianiuk could be the American version.

He makes lots of farm calls and often has to stick a gloved arm into a skittish cow's rear end.

Veterinary medicine has come a long way since the 1940s England depicted in the show, but in some important ways, it hasn't changed much.

Demianiuk of the Cedar Grove Veterinary Clinic uses a portable ultrasound system to determine if a cow is pregnant, but he has to insert the probe into the cow's rectum, thus the job is still messy.

And amid the bantering, there is a trusting relationship between the vet and area farmers.

Whether the farmer has 50 or 1,000 cows, the animals are his livelihood, so anything Demianiuk can do to make a cow more profitable is a blessing.

Last week, Demianiuk visited Dave Ten Dolle's farm in rural Oostburg, something he does every two weeks. There was a lot of joking between the two men and Ten Dolle's son Jeff, 28, who works full time on the family farm that has 200 dairy cows.

"Mike's been my vet since I started farming 18 years ago," said Dave Ten Dolle, who took over his father-in-law's farm when he retired. "We always got along good. I like him a lot."

Demianiuk was at Ten Dolle's farm for almost two hours in the morning, then spent 3-1/2 hours on a farm with 900 cows.

Perhaps because there were two strangers — a reporter and photographer Sam Arendt — Ten Dolle's cows were more nervous than usual, Demianiuk said.

"I always pat them on the rump to let them know I'm there, to introduce myself," he said. "They turn their heads, see me and aren't surprised."

While at Ten Dolle's farm, he determined three cows were pregnant, one that had been bred

wasn't pregnant and another one was questionable and would be checked again in two weeks. The uteruses of a half dozen or more freshened cows, those that recently gave birth, were clean and their reproductive tracks were back to normal.

Demianiuk examined and cleaned the hoof of a cow that had been limping. He gave her a tranquilizer before hoisting the rear leg high with a winch and strong rope. Just as he finished, the tranquilizer took full effect and the cow laid down with a thud on the barn floor, causing Demianiuk and Ten Dolle to jump out of the way.

"There's nothing wrong with the foot. It might have sprained a knee," Demianiuk told Ten Dolle.

Two ailing calves that had fevers got mixed prognoses.

A three-week old calf had an systemic infection that originated in its navel, spread through the bloodstream and settled in a knee joint, causing it to swell. A 12-week regimen of penicillin and other antibiotics may help, but Demianiuk wasn't too encouraging.

"It's very difficult to treat. We prefer to prevent it rather than treat it," he said.

The calf could be treated more aggressively, but the cost would be prohibitive, he said.

A four-day old calf had diarrhea and wasn't drinking much milk. Demianiuk inserted a tube into its esophagus, administered electrolytes and left a supply for Ten Dolle to give with instructions to try to get the calf to drink more milk.

"If we keep giving her fluids, she will come back," the vet said.

The Ten Dolles had 19 calves born in the last month, including twin heifers born that morning.

"I almost called you this morning," Ten Dolle said. "All of a sudden, we had five calves right in a row."

Information on each of Ten Dolle's cows is kept in a computer database at the clinic, which tells when cows should be dried up (a rest period from milking prior to the next lactation cycle) and when they should be bred, which is done by artificial insemination. Ten Dolle is sent a list prior to Demianiuk's visit so cows that need to be checked are waiting in the barn for him.

"He knows I'm coming every two weeks so any animal that needs to be taken care of, we can do then," he said.

Demianiuk also treated a barn cat named Snowball for a swollen shut eye, determining there was too much skin flap around the eye for it to open fully. He put penicillin directly into the eye.

There is a simple surgery that can be performed on the cat if they want to spend the money, Demianiuk said.

It's unlikely the barn cat will get that surgery, but the owner of a house cat might have opted for the procedure.

The Cedar Grove clinic's practice is about evenly split between small and large animals, something that is becoming increasingly rare, Demianiuk said.

"Now, there are specialists for everything," he said. "That's not bad. The specialists teach us things all the time. We're always going to seminars.

"It's hard to find graduates who want to do what I do."

Demianiuk, who grew up in a Chicago suburb, used to spend summers at his aunt and uncle's dairy farm, where he met the local veterinarian.

He would travel with the vet on his farm rounds and decided that's what he wanted to do.

Demianiuk got his veterinary degree from the University of Illinois.

His son Ryan, who used to travel with him on farm rounds, his brother and brother-in-law are also veterinarians.

Ryan graduated from the University of Wisconsin veterinary school in Madison and is now a surgical resident at Michigan State University.

Demianiuk said he enjoys treating pets and farm animals.

"When you're treating small animals, you treat the animal. With large animals, you're taking care of the cow, but you're also looking at the total herd health. You're looking at it from a different perspective," he said.

"Farmers aren't cold toward their animals, but they have to look at that animal as a production unit. They all have their pets that they keep around longer than they should.

"That doesn't happen as often when you have 500-plus cows. They look at the cost to treat vs. replacing the cow."

With the advent of larger farms and new technology, such as the portable ultrasound, farm calls are mostly scheduled appointments rather than emergency calls.

"It used to be I would go to four to five farms a day and do one or two things at each one. Now, I go to a large farm and will be there three to four hours," Demianiuk said.

"We used to depend on what we could feel when checking for pregnancy. Now, I can actually see the calf and its heart beat, determine the sex and assess the viability. The more information I'm able to give the farmer, the better decision he can make."

Demianiuk said he enjoys his job and plans to make farm calls as long as he's able to do so.

"I like the variety and I like the people," he said. "They're honest, good, hardworking people. And I like being able to help the animals."

Image Information: With his black bag, Cedar Grove veterinarian Michael Demianiuk is ready for small and large animals. Photo by Sam Arendt