



A Doctor for Cows



Doctors and nurses help people who are ill. Sick puppies and kittens visit the veterinarian. Did you know that some veterinarians are doctors for cattle?



Cattle veterinarians drive to farms and ranches to take care of cattle. They drive a vet truck stocked with all of the things they need to take care of their four-legged patients.



Ranchers have chosen the job of raising cattle. They are caring and work hard to give their cattle the best lives. Ranchers check on their cattle every day to make sure they are healthy and have water and food. They take care of the environment by carefully managing grassland and water resources.



On Thanksgiving, Christmas, and even their wedding day, ranchers and veterinarians care for animals before doing anything else. Together, they ensure that all of the animals' needs are met.



Most calves are born in the spring. Ranchers wake up several times through the night to check on the cows and make sure the birthing process is smooth. Usually calves are born without a problem, but sometimes they need help. If the rancher is not able to help the calf be born, they call a veterinarian for assistance.



After calves are born, their mothers' milk helps them grow and keeps them healthy. Calves are usually standing and nursing in an hour. If a calf has trouble nursing, a rancher or veterinarian will give them milk through a tube.



Just like kids get vaccinated before going to school, calves get vaccines to keep them from getting sick. Veterinarians provide vaccines to make sure they are preventing as many diseases as possible.



Despite good milk and vaccines, sometimes calves still get sick and need help feeling better. Since ranchers want the best for their cattle, they provide the sick ones with medicine to cure their disease.



Just like humans may ask a dietitian for advice on nutrition, cattle have nutritionists that make sure they get the nutrients they need. Nutrition is an important part of animal health. Cattle are called ruminants because their stomach has four compartments. These compartments help them turn plants like grass and corn into protein.



Cattle eat a diet of grass for most of their lives. They graze land that is not able to be farmed. As they get older, they are provided with corn to help them grow faster. The nutritionist helps the ranchers provide the correct balance of corn and hay so that they don't get an upset stomach.



Veterinarians and ranchers work together to make sure cattle live healthy lives. In turn, cattle provide tasty, healthy beef like hamburgers and steaks for families to enjoy. Beef is a great source of nutrition and helps bones and muscles grow strong. The process of raising beef is also good for the environment. Thanks to the hard work of ranchers and veterinarians, you can look forward to your next meal of beef, knowing it is safe and healthy.



Glossary

Beef: Meat that comes from cattle. This is a safe and healthy protein source.

Cattle: the overarching term for the animal species bovine that consists of cows, bulls, steers, heifers, and calves.

Calf (plural: calves): a young bovine (usually less than 7 months old)

Heifer: a young female that has not yet birthed a calf

Steer: a castrated male

Bull: a male bovine

Cow: a female bovine that has had at least one calf

Medicine: Treatments that help cure animals of disease. This includes antibiotics and anti-inflammatories.

Vaccines: A shot given to animals to help them develop an immune system to fight off disease.

Veterinarian: a doctor that treats animals



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