Amazing Agriculture Adventure

Amazing Agriculture Adventure is a national Agriculture in the Classroom program that gives grades 4-5 students a hands on, interactive experience. The program focuses on bringing accurate, balanced and current information about the agriculture industry to Manitoba students while fostering critical thinking about agriculture issues.

Agriculture in the Classroom has partnered with the University of Manitoba Faculty of Agriculture and Food Sciences. The adventure takes places at the Glenlea Farm, and Farm and Food Discovery Centre (FFDC) each September. The program utilized both the Dairy and Swine barns with a collaboration of U of M agriculture staff with those from the Manitoba Pork Council and Dairy Farmers of Manitoba.

At the dairy barn students learn what is involved in the care of the animals, such as their diet, feed and water intake, milking systems and schedule. Students learn how much milk a cow produces in a day, and what other products are made from that milk. Students leave with a better understanding of why dairy cattle are so important in our food system.

At the swine barn students are introduced to biosecurity measures in place, and the action farmers take to prevent the spread of disease to their animals. Inside the barn students learn about housing systems, electronic sow feeders, ear tags, and many aspects of pork production.

At the Farm and Food Discovery center students get a glimpse into pork production from farrow to finish through large viewing windows into the working swine barn.

For many Amazing Agriculture Adventure students it is the first time they have been on a farm. The Glenlea Farm and the Farm and Food Discovery Centre allow students a true farm experience.

Animal Health Report (AHR) Cards

Have you ever noticed red cards placed either in front or behind cage cards, inside Animal Facility rooms? These are Animal Health Report cards, or AHR cards, created by Veterinary Services to help identify animal health concerns and outline a course of action. Follow-up actions may include monitoring, treatment(s), or euthanasia. Each card has a specific number, per animal, which is referenced in emails and other documentation. This card stays with the animal, even if it’s moved to a different cage, and allows an ‘at a glance’ visual of all previous health conditions and treatments. AHR cards are placed either in the front of the cage card or behind, depending on whether health concerns are active or resolved, respectively.

Often, Animal Care staff is the first to note any concerns on daily animal evaluations and will start a card by completing: the date, Investigator’s name, protocol number, strain, animal ID, name of staff noting concern, and the nature of the concern. The AHR card is then placed on the animal’s cage, and the number noted on the white board in the Animal Facility office, alerting Veterinary Services to examine the animal on rounds. Veterinary Services will record the date the animal

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Animal Health Report (AHR) Cards (continued)

was examined, describe its condition, prescribe treatments or monitoring on the card, and flag the outside of the animal room with a red ‘treatment’ card to let all staff know follow-up care is required in the room.

Communication with Investigators and Lab staff is vital! In addition to respecting the information in protocols (ie. contraindications for some treatments), we request approval before administering treatments. Similarly, if an animal reaches a humane endpoint and requires euthanasia, the Investigator and Lab will be contacted as soon as possible to allow time for tissue collection procedures.

We encourage Investigators and Labs to start an AHR card for any non-life threatening health concerns they may have with their animals, to allow an examination by Veterinary Services; please first communicate with Animal Care staff regarding the health concern, and obtain AHR cards as needed. When animal experimentation is complete, please return cards to Animal Care staff.

For additional reference, an SOP on AHR cards is accessible via JUMP (SOP #VSF005), under My Research Tools, Animal Care SOP’s, Veterinary Services. As always, we are available to assist with any animal health or research questions or concerns, and can be reached at Veterinaryservices@umanitoba.ca

Compassion Fatigue and Compassion Satisfaction: Is the Cost of Caring Affecting Me?

Animal Care Staff recently had the opportunity to participate in a webinar on compassion fatigue and after viewing we felt it would be valuable to share with the research community. The video of the presentation is now available for free in the link below. Personnel working with animals in research may experience anxiety, stress, sadness or fear. One of the most silent but significant stressors in the laboratory animal profession is the grief experienced during animal morbidity and mortality or in anticipation of one or both of these events. The human-animal bond is a rich and complex relationship that exists in many forms, as by nature, humans have a fundamental tendency to develop attachments towards animals. Given that we spend a significant portion of our day working with laboratory animals, it is not surprising when strong, emotional bonds develop or when anxiety or grief over the loss of animals under our care occurs. It is important to understand that all individuals associated with animal care programs, whether direct or indirect, intermittent or continuous, may experience these feelings which can impact work performance in various ways. The webinar explores the complex emotional experience of working in the field of laboratory animal care and will assist individuals in navigating approaches to self-care and support.

You will be asked to register on the GoToWebinar website (with name and email address): https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/recording/7406560281194855938