

Welcome to the “Miracle of Birth” exhibit at the Minnesota State Fair and thank you for volunteering!

Your participation is very important to the success of the exhibit. It is also important that you know the message that the MVMA is projecting to the general public about large animal veterinary medicine.

KEY MESSAGES:

- The birth of animals is one of the most rewarding aspects of being an animal producer and veterinarian. Through the Miracle of Birth Center we can share that excitement with the public.
- Producers and veterinarians work together to keep animals comfortable and disease free, including creating living environments suitable for Minnesota’s weather.
- Keeping animals healthy safeguards our food supply.

COMMUNICATIONS OBJECTIVE:

- Fairgoers learn about the birth process and appreciate the care animals receive from producers and veterinarians throughout their life cycle.
- Youth are aware of careers in veterinary medicine and animal agriculture.
- The exhibit space is easy to navigate and provides a positive learning experience even when crowded.
- The general public better appreciates veterinarians’ role in maintaining a safe food supply.

ADMITTANCE AND PARKING

A map of the fairgrounds and tickets to get in and one for parking are sent to each volunteer the week before the fair begins. If you have any questions about parking or where the Miracle of Birth Center is, please call the MVMA office, 651-645-7533.

ATTIRE

Please wear khaki colored pants and comfortable shoes. The MVMA will have monogrammed denim shirts for you at the volunteer break room (in the FFA section of the building). There will be several sizes of green coveralls for you if you need to assist in a birthing event during your shift. When you are finished with your shift, place your shirt in the wash hamper in the break room so it can be washed and ready for the next volunteer. Your nametag for your shirt will also be in the break room.

ARRIVAL AND PREPARATION

Please arrive at least one-half hour before your scheduled shift time for briefing on important details by the Center staff. Drs. Mary Olson, Florian Ledermann, Holly Neaton, David Wright, and Gala Beckendorf will be in the building to assist you.

THINGS TO KNOW AND DO

The challenge for the MVMA is to make sure the right message is given to the Fair-goers. Everything you say or do should represent what veterinarians in food animal practice, equine, academia, industry or regulatory veterinary medicine do in their daily lives. The Birthing Center will be a powerful “attractant” for the public and once you have their attention; it is the perfect time to share your knowledge about how animals are cared for in today’s agriculture. You will want to share interesting experiences from your practice and try to educate the public on how important

veterinarians are to quality of life today. You should move about the exhibit area and be available if any of the animals need assistance during birth.

We plan to assist any cows during birthing and will use that as a “teachable moment” for you to educate the veterinary students who are present. If any major dystocia occurs and a C-section is needed, the cow will be removed from the exhibit and taken to the College for the surgery. There will be a supply of equipment and drugs available to us in the service room if needed. All of the animals will be charted so everyone should know how the birthing process is progressing. Our guidelines for cows will be to let labor proceed naturally until feet are presented, as long as it doesn’t exceed 4 hours. At that time we will assist in completing the delivery. We will demonstrate newborn care and how colostrum is tested for quality and administered to the newborn. (See separate calving protocol)

The ewes will be managed in a similar manner except the lambs will be nursing. (See separate lambing protocol)

The sows will not be assisted unless the farrowing is not being completed within the 4-hour window. It will be important to chart each birth so we know when to intervene. (See separate farrowing protocol)

SAFETY CONCERNS

We will need to be concerned about possible safety hazards in the exhibit at all times. Please be very observant as to the various animals’ behavior and warn the public, especially small children, to stand back if you see potential problems. The State Fair has wanted the public to be able to get close to animals in the barns for many years so we have to realize there will always be some risk...we just need to use our common sense and take precautions in this exhibit as we see fit. We will be moving animals in and out of the Center before and after exhibit hours to minimize public risk. We will have rope and standards to keep people back from animals that could kick or bite. You and the students can hold the baby piglets so children can pet them (which will be a rare experience for many of them). There will be wash areas for the public who have handled the animals. **PLEASE REMIND THEM IF THEY TOUCH OR HANDLE THE ANIMALS, THEY MUST WASH!** They must be made aware of the potential transfer of dangerous bacteria if the next thing they do after handling a newborn animals is, for example, grab a hot dog and eat it.

We are expecting a huge number of people to enter this exhibit. The traffic flow through the exhibit is important so that more people can experience the birthing events. Please observe people for signs of fainting or other illness if things are congested and, if necessary, contact Mary, Holly, Florian, Dave or Gala. They will have a phone to call the State Fair authorities. In the mean time, clear people away so there is enough air circulating. If something occurs that we don’t want the public to observe, we will have a supply of portable curtain walls to close off that part of the exhibit until the situation is remedied. (we are talking about hemorrhages, deformed fetuses, etc.). (We have selected females that are in parity 2 or more in an attempt to reduce the birth complication potential.)

MEDIA

The media will be very interested in this exhibit. It makes good front page and prime time news stories. Again, we need to be conscious of the “message”. If the media happens on the scene and wants to interview you, please defer to this year’s exhibit co-chairs, Drs. Mary Olson, Florian Ledermann or Holly Neaton. They have had media training and will have an idea of how to present the message. Press releases have been sent and the media will be receiving

appointments for interviews or animal appearances at their fair locations to help us present the best public relations. They may film you in action, so, “be prepared”.

PROTESTERS

With an exhibit such as this, there is always potential for groups such as PETA to organize a protest in or around our Center. We need not fear this action, as we believe what we are doing is educational for the public and will help them appreciate the importance of good animal health. If you observe or encounter someone beginning to heckle or demonstrate, **DO NOT** encounter or communicate with the person. Contact Mary, Holly, Florian, David or Gala immediately. The State Fair Police are aware of this potential and will react accordingly.

AUDIO-VISUAL

We will have monitors and cameras scattered about the exhibit for public viewing of birthing events that are occurring or from previously filmed events.

The MVMA APPRECIATES YOUR EFFORT to help make the exhibit a success. We hope it will give you renewed energy in your daily work as a veterinarian (or if you are retired, a renewed feeling of accomplishment in your life’s chosen profession). We don’t expect things to all go perfect...and the public needs to know that not all things go according to plan in the animal world...but please feel free to offer any suggestions for improvement during or after your shift is complete. And most of all spread the word to your colleagues to get involved next year!! If you have any questions prior to arrival, call the MVMA office at 651-645-7533