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Animal Health and Care

The veterinary animals — farm and domestic — and how they are kept healthy

Nji Griphan

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A note on this book

Veterinary work is also in my background, and animal health stands among the subjects of this school. This book teaches the care of the animals veterinary people work on — cattle, goats, sheep, pigs, poultry, dogs, cats, horses and rabbits — their feeding, housing, common illnesses and prevention, in sound general words. It is guidance and teaching only: it gives no prescription and no treatment

plan for any named animal. A sick animal goes to the veterinary doctor — that line stands over everything in this book.

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Chapter 1

The Animals We Care For

The veterinary world is wide: the farm animals that feed families and the domestic animals that share their homes. This chapter introduces them group by group, with what each kind needs from the people who keep them.

Cattle, sheep and goats — the ruminants

Ruminants carry a fermentation vat — the rumen — that turns grass and roughage into milk, meat and work. Their care turns on good grazing or forage, clean water always, mineral access, shelter from extremes, and calm handling. Goats browse where cattle graze; sheep flock where goats scatter — feed and fence each kind as itself, not as a small cow.

Pigs and poultry — the fast growers

Pigs are intelligent, clean by instinct when given the chance, and fast-growing on good feed; they need dry bedding, shade and wallowing or cooling in heat, since they cannot sweat. Poultry — chickens, ducks, turkeys, guinea fowl — need dry litter, clean water, protection from predators, and space that keeps flock stress low.

Dogs and cats — the domestic companions

Dogs need feeding matched to age and work, exercise, training with patience, and preventive care — vaccination and parasite control — from puppyhood. Cats are obligate carnivores with their own nutritional rules, quieter and more independent, but no less in need of vaccination,

parasite control and a safe territory.

Horses and rabbits

Horses are grazing athletes: forage first, clean water, hoof care, teeth checked, and exercise daily; their digestive system punishes sudden feed changes. Rabbits need hay without limit, protection from heat and predators, and gentle handling — a frightened rabbit can injure its own spine struggling.

Key points

- Each species is cared for as itself, not as another animal scaled.
- Water, forage, shelter and calm handling are universal foundations.
- This book teaches care; the veterinary doctor treats sickness.

Exercises

1. List the veterinary animals kept in your community and group them by kind.

2. Compare the feeding nature of a ruminant, a pig and a cat in five lines each.

3. Name three foundations every species in this chapter shares.

Chapter 2

Feeding Animals Well

Feeding is the daily medicine of animal keeping: most health begins, or fails, at the trough. This chapter teaches feeding principles — energy, protein, minerals, water — and the feeding character of each kind of animal.

What feed must supply

Feed supplies energy for life and work, protein for growth, milk and repair, minerals and vitamins in small decisive amounts, and water above all — an animal can survive weeks short of feed and only days short of water. Rations are judged against the animal's stage: growing, pregnant, lactating, working animals eat for two purposes at once.

Feeding the ruminants

Forage first: the rumen's microbes feed the animal by feeding on fibre, so sudden rich rations sicken the very system they mean to help. Introduce concentrates gradually, keep long fibre in the diet, offer mineral licks, and never let mouldy feed reach the trough — moulds poison stock as surely as they poison stored grain.

Feeding pigs, poultry and companions

Pigs and poultry, with single stomachs, need balanced rations whose protein quality matters, fed in measured amounts — overfeeding wastes money and fattens breeders into infertility. Dogs and cats need complete foods fitted to species and stage; cats must never be fed as small dogs, and no companion thrives on scraps alone.

Water — the forgotten nutrient

Clean water, always available, in vessels cleaned regularly. A lactating cow may drink a hundred litres a day; a hen's laying collapses within days of water failure. When animals sicken mysteriously, the wise keeper checks the water before blaming the feed.

Key points

- Water first: it is the nutrient animals can least wait for.
- Ruminants: forage first, changes gradual, mould never.
- Feed the species and the stage, not the habit.

Exercises

1. State what feed must supply, in order of urgency.
2. Write feeding rules for one species in ten lines.
3. A flock's laying falls suddenly. List your checks in order, water included.

Chapter 3

Housing and Daily Care

Good housing is preventive medicine built in timber and wire. This chapter covers shelter, bedding, space, hygiene and the daily observation round that catches trouble while it is still small.

Shelter from the extremes

Animals need shade from fierce sun, shelter from driving rain and wind, and dry lying above all — damp bedding breeds the organisms of a dozen diseases. Housing need not be grand; it must be dry, draught-free at lying height yet ventilated above, and sited so water drains away, not through.

Space and footing

Overcrowding is a disease decision: it spreads infection, raises stress, and turns feeding into combat where the weakest eat last and least. Floors must grip — animals that slip injure legs and udders — and yards must offer the lying, feeding and watering room the species' behaviour demands.

The daily round

Once or twice daily, walk the animals with seeing eyes: who is eating, who is standing apart, whose eyes are dull, whose dung has changed, who is lame. Most animal illness announces itself first as behaviour. The keeper who knows each animal's normal will spot the abnormal on the first day, when help is cheapest.

Hygiene of the house

Clean bedding, cleaned water vessels, manure managed away from feed and water, and new animals held apart and observed before joining the herd or flock. Quarantine of newcomers is not suspicion of the seller; it is respect for the diseases that travel silently.

Key points

- Dry lying, shade, ventilation, drainage: housing's four duties.
- Overcrowding is a disease decision.
- The daily round catches illness on its first, cheapest day.

Exercises

1. Judge a real animal house against the four duties.
2. Write a daily-round checklist for one species.
3. Explain quarantine of new animals to a sceptical keeper.

Chapter 4

Common Illnesses — Recognising Trouble

This chapter teaches recognition, not treatment: the signs by which common illnesses of farm and domestic animals announce themselves, grouped by system, so a keeper knows what he is seeing and how urgently to act. A sick animal goes to the veterinary doctor; recognition is how it gets there in time.

The general signs of illness

Across species, illness speaks a common first language: appetite lost or changed, separation from the group, dullness, fever, changed dung or urine, drop in milk or eggs, coat roughened, breathing altered. Any of these earns close observation the same day; several together earn the veterinary doctor without delay.

Digestive troubles

Bloat in ruminants — the left flank swelling like a drum — is an emergency of hours. Scouring (diarrhoea) in young animals kills by dehydration faster than by its cause. In all species, sudden feed change, mouldy feed and dirty water stand behind much digestive trouble: review the trough and the bucket before anything else.

Breathing, skin and parasites

Coughing, laboured breathing and nasal discharge mark respiratory disease, which spreads fast in crowded, dusty housing. Skin troubles — mange, ringworm, wounds that

will not heal — and the parasite burdens, worms inside and ticks outside, drain animals slowly and spread between them; they are herd problems, not individual bad luck.

Emergencies — act first

Some signs allow no waiting: bloat, a labour that is not progressing, poisoning suspected, severe bleeding, collapse, a dog or cat that cannot urinate, any animal that cannot rise. In emergencies the teaching is one sentence: keep the animal calm and safe, and get the veterinary doctor — this book deliberately gives no doses and no procedures, because the wrong confident act is worse than a fast journey.

Key points

- Learn illness's first language: appetite, separation, dullness, fever, change.
- Bloat, stalled labour, poisoning, collapse: emergencies — the veterinary doctor, now.
- This chapter teaches recognition only; treatment belongs to the veterinary doctor.

Exercises

1. List the general signs of illness from memory.
2. Classify six described cases as observe, veterinary visit, or emergency.
3. Explain why this book gives no doses.

Chapter 5

Prevention — The Cheapest Medicine

Most veterinary success is invisible: the disease that never happened. This chapter builds the preventive year — vaccination, parasite control, hygiene, breeding and records — by which herds, flocks and companions stay healthy.

Vaccination

Vaccines train the immune system against named diseases before it meets them. Each species and region has its schedule — for dogs, rabies vaccination is both animal protection and a legal, life-saving duty to people. Keep the record of every vaccination: what, when, which animal. An unrecorded vaccination is, to the next keeper or doctor, an undone one.

Parasite control

Worms inside and ticks, lice and fleas outside steal growth, milk and blood, and ticks carry fevers of their own. Control is planned, not panicked: grazing management, regular planned deworming on veterinary advice, tick control suited to the area, and clean housing that breaks life cycles. Rotate and time treatments as the veterinary doctor directs — resistance grows where chemicals are used carelessly.

Breeding and the young

Healthy young begin before birth: mothers fed and vaccinated appropriately, births attended in clean places, and the newborn's first milk — colostrum, carrying the mother's immunity — taken within the first hours. More young animals are saved by colostrum and cleanliness than by any medicine bought later.

Records that protect

Births, deaths and their causes, treatments, vaccinations, movements on and off the farm: the animal-health notebook is the herd's memory and the veterinary doctor's best instrument. Patterns invisible in memory — deaths always in one pen, illness always after market day — stand plain in records.

Key points

- Prevention is the cheapest medicine and the least visible.
- Rabies vaccination protects animals and people alike.
- Colostrum within hours, cleanliness at birth: the young animal's first medicine.

Exercises

1. Draft a preventive calendar for one species in your area, to confirm with a veterinary doctor.
2. Explain colostrum's role in three sentences.
3. Design an animal-health record page for a small herd.

Chapter 6

Working With the Veterinary Doctor

The final chapter teaches the partnership on which animal health stands: what the veterinary doctor does, how a keeper prepares for the visit, and the keeper's daily share of the work — ending where this book began, with its standing line.

What the veterinary doctor brings

Diagnosis from signs and tests, treatment chosen for the actual disease and animal, surgery where needed, and the preventive planning of the whole herd or flock. The doctor's knowledge is the product of years of training in exactly the judgements this book refuses to fake — which is why this book sends you to them.

Preparing for the visit

Have ready: the animal safely caught or penned, its history in order — when signs began, appetite, dung, treatments already given (with honesty about them), and the records book open. A keeper who reports exactly is the doctor's second pair of eyes; a keeper who hides a home treatment steals the doctor's map.

The keeper's daily share

Between visits, animal health is the keeper's: feeding, housing, the daily round, prevention kept to schedule, records kept honestly. Veterinary medicine is a partnership in which the professional is consulted at need and the keeper is on duty every day. Both halves matter;

neither replaces the other.

The standing line

Carry this book's rule out of its pages and into the yard: guidance and teaching live here; diagnosis and treatment live with the veterinary doctor. A sick animal goes to the veterinary doctor. The keeper who learns that line, and acts on it early, will save more animals than any shelf of remedies.

Key points

- The doctor diagnoses and treats; the keeper observes, prevents and reports exactly.
- Prepare the animal, the history and the records before the visit.
- A sick animal goes to the veterinary doctor — early.

Exercises

1. Write the history you would give a veterinary doctor for a case you invent.

2. List the keeper's daily duties in animal health.

3. State this book's standing line and explain it to a new keeper.

Appendix — Worked Examples and Practice

From Chapter 1 — The Animals We Care For

Worked example: a new keeper asks for 'the animal feed' as if one answer existed. The ruminant needs forage for its rumen; the pig, a concentrated ration it cannot ferment for itself; the cat, meat-based nutrition its body demands. One question, three different right answers — the first lesson of animal care is that species is destiny.

From Chapter 2 — Feeding Animals Well

Worked example: goats moved abruptly from dry grazing to rich concentrate scour and go off feed — the rumen's microbes, staffed for fibre, were overwhelmed. Restoring forage and reintroducing the concentrate over a week settles them. The feed was not bad; the change was. In feeding, how is often the whole question.

From Chapter 3 — Housing and Daily Care

Worked example: a poultry keeper loses chicks 'without cause' each batch. The daily round, honestly kept, finds it: chicks crowd one corner at night — cold draught at floor level on the other side, though the house 'felt warm' at human height. A low board against the draught ends the losses. Housing is read at the animal's height, not ours.

From Chapter 4 — Common Illnesses — Recognising Trouble

Worked example: a goat stands apart at evening, ears drooped, untouched at the trough, dung normal, breathing

fast. One sign might wait for morning's round; three together — separation, appetite, breathing — say otherwise. The keeper calls the veterinary doctor that night, and a pneumonia is caught in its first day instead of its fourth. Recognition, exercised early, is the keeper's half of veterinary medicine.

From Chapter 5 — Prevention — The Cheapest Medicine

Worked example: a farm's records show lamb deaths clustered in the wettest month, in the lowest pen. Memory had blamed 'the season'; the records blame drainage. One pen raised and drained, and the cluster vanishes next year. Prevention often looks like this: not a product purchased, but a pattern finally seen.

From Chapter 6 — Working With the Veterinary Doctor

Worked example: two farms call the doctor for 'a sick cow'. The first offers a caught animal, three days of noted signs, and an open record book; the diagnosis takes twenty minutes. The second offers a cow somewhere in the bush and a shrug. Same doctor, same disease — different outcomes, decided before the doctor arrived. Preparation is treatment's first half.

Further Practice — Review and Discussion

Work through these prompts in writing; they are the revision spine of this book. Answer in full sentences, with examples from your own place of study wherever the prompt allows.

Chapter 1 — The Animals We Care For

- Explain in your own words, with one example: Each species is cared for as itself, not as another animal scaled.
- Explain in your own words, with one example: Water, forage, shelter and calm handling are universal foundations.
- Explain in your own words, with one example: This book teaches care; the veterinary doctor treats sickness.

Discussion: where does the subject of this chapter — the animals we care for — touch your own community, farm, school or workplace? Write one page, naming real places and real constraints, and end with one question you would research next.

Chapter 2 — Feeding Animals Well

- Explain in your own words, with one example: Water first: it is the nutrient animals can least wait for.
- Explain in your own words, with one example: Ruminants: forage first, changes gradual, mould never.
- Explain in your own words, with one example: Feed the species and the stage, not the habit.

Discussion: where does the subject of this chapter — feeding animals well — touch your own community, farm, school or workplace? Write one page, naming real places and real constraints, and end with one question you would research next.

Chapter 3 — Housing and Daily Care

- Explain in your own words, with one example: Dry lying, shade, ventilation, drainage: housing's four duties.
- Explain in your own words, with one example: Overcrowding is a disease decision.
- Explain in your own words, with one example: The daily round catches illness on its first, cheapest day.

Discussion: where does the subject of this chapter — housing and daily care — touch your own community, farm, school or workplace? Write one page, naming real places and real constraints, and end with one question you would research next.

Chapter 4 — Common Illnesses — Recognising Trouble

- Explain in your own words, with one example: Learn illness's first language: appetite, separation, dullness, fever, change.
- Explain in your own words, with one example: Bloat, stalled labour, poisoning, collapse: emergencies — the veterinary doctor, now.
- Explain in your own words, with one example: This chapter teaches recognition only; treatment belongs to

the veterinary doctor.

Discussion: where does the subject of this chapter — common illnesses — recognising trouble — touch your own community, farm, school or workplace? Write one page, naming real places and real constraints, and end with one question you would research next.

Chapter 5 — Prevention — The Cheapest Medicine

- Explain in your own words, with one example: Prevention is the cheapest medicine and the least visible.
- Explain in your own words, with one example: Rabies vaccination protects animals and people alike.
- Explain in your own words, with one example: Colostrum within hours, cleanliness at birth: the young animal's first medicine.

Discussion: where does the subject of this chapter — prevention — the cheapest medicine — touch your own community, farm, school or workplace? Write one page, naming real places and real constraints, and end with one question you would research next.

Chapter 6 — Working With the Veterinary Doctor

- Explain in your own words, with one example: The doctor diagnoses and treats; the keeper observes, prevents and reports exactly.
- Explain in your own words, with one example: Prepare the animal, the history and the records before the visit.

- Explain in your own words, with one example: A sick animal goes to the veterinary doctor — early.

Discussion: where does the subject of this chapter — working with the veterinary doctor — touch your own community, farm, school or workplace? Write one page, naming real places and real constraints, and end with one question you would research next.

Glossary of Key Terms

Ruminant — An animal — cattle, sheep, goats — fermenting forage in a multi-chambered stomach.

Colostrum — The first milk after birth, carrying the mother's immunity to the newborn.

Quarantine — Holding new or sick animals apart to prevent disease spread.

Bloat — Dangerous gas accumulation in the rumen; an emergency.

Vaccination — Training the immune system against a named disease in advance.

Deworming — Planned treatment against internal parasites, on veterinary advice.

Hermetic (housing context) — Sealed against air and pests; in housing, proof against entry and damp.

Preventive care — The scheduled work — vaccination, parasite control, hygiene — that stops disease before it starts.

End of book. Nji Griphan · griphan.48hourrfprescue.com · info@griphan.48hourrfprescue.com