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Ask the VMD

In case of emergency A reader asks:
I would like to get a first-aid box ready for the barn. We have both cattle and horses, and eventually will get a few head of sheep and hogs. What do you recommend to keep in a first-aid kit for livestock?

Dr. Sheaffer comments:
The following is a list of items I recommend as basics to include in your first-aid kit. These supplies are most helpful in an emergency situation.

In regard to the medications listed, you must remember that most medications are dated and therefore should be used before they expire. Expired medications should be discarded and not used. The first-aid kit supplies should be reviewed every six months. Any outdated medication should be replaced.

Bandage Materials

Sheet cotton — for use under pressure wraps over wounds of legs and feet;

Roll cotton — for cleaning wounds, for use with alcohol when giving injections, and for making an emergency splint;

Gauze rolls — for use over cotton to make a bandage tight. This is especially good for hooves;

Gauze squares — for use in applying a wound dressing directly on a wound;

Track wraps of heavy elastic bandages — for providing support, controlling swelling and/or bleeding when applied over cotton and gauze;

Tape — either medical adhesive tape or electricians tape is satisfactory;

An old but strong bed sheet or bath towel — for applying pressure around the animal's body. When used properly, this will control bleeding of a cut milk vein in cattle, or prevent a traumatic hernia from enlarging until your veterinarian arrives.

Injectable Medications

Antibiotics — usually procaine penicillin G is adequate. Always keep refrigerated so that it is effective until the expiration date on the bottle;

Tranquilizer or sedative — like promazine, Acepromazine or Rompum. Be sure you are familiar with dosages, indications and contraindications for any tranquilizer or sedative that you use. Make sure that your veterinarian knows what you have on hand so that he or she can direct you how to use it when needed;

Epinephrine or adrenalin — used for shock and

allergic reactions where the cardiovascular and respiratory systems are impaired;

Antihistamine — useful in most emergency situations for treating allergic reactions to vaccines, insect stings, other medications, etc;

Analgesics for pain and inflammation — injectable dipyrone can be used for intestinal pain, colic, in all species. Many of the newer antiprostoglandins are effective as a quick acting analgesic. Also, oral aspirin can be used for pain or to bring down a fever;

Tetanus antitoxin — this is most important in horses and sheep to provide temporary protection against tetanus or lock jaw.

Topical Medications

Antiseptic cleaning solution — hydrogen peroxide is good as an initial cleanser but should not be used repeatedly because it destroys delicate tissues. Mild soaps like Safeguard, Dial, PhisoHex, or Castile can be used initially to clean a dirty wound. Many times, however, cold running water is a better cleaner than either soaps or peroxide;

Wound dressing — Nitrofurazone or Nolvasan ointments can be used under

gauze and cotton on a wound to prevent local infections;

Tamed iodine antiseptic — useful for puncture wounds of the foot and also for the navel of newborns;

Eyewash — for removing foreign materials and cleaning an injured eye. An antibiotic eye ointment should also be included to medicate an injured eye until the veterinarian arrives;

Milk of Magnesia — an antacid and laxative.

Instruments

Needles and syringes for giving injections;

Forceps — for removing splinters and other foreign material from wounds;

Surgical scissors — blunt — for trimming damaged tissue and hair around a wound;

Bloat trarcar — for relieving gas bloat in cattle and sheep. Your veterinarian can instruct you in the proper use of a bloat trarcar.

Restraint Equipment

Rope;
Halter;
Nose lead for cattle;
Twitch for horses;
Snare for pigs;

Miscellaneous Equipment

Hose — many times cool running water is the best way to clean a wound or to cool a hot swollen leg;

Blanket — for warming animals that are chilled or in shock;

Clean bucket — for applying warm or cold medicated solutions to injuries.

Miscellaneous Medications

Linaments;
Epsom salts;
Leg sweats.

If you have a question you would like to have answered by the team of doctors at Valley Animal Hospital, send it to Ask the VMD, Box 366, Lititz, PA 17543.

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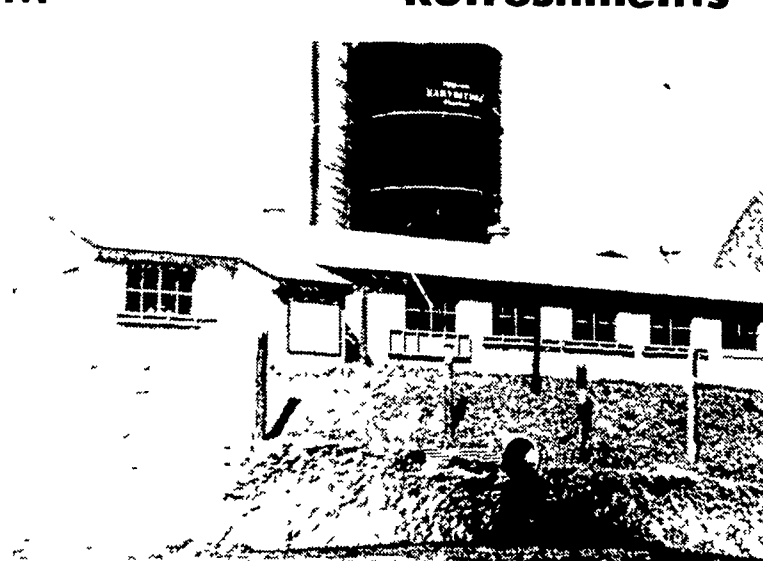
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