



Dr. Lisa Doherty and her baby, Amy, do a checkup at the LaMalot Farm near Breezewood. Dr. Doherty feels fortunate to be able to have it all, her baby and her career as a veterinarian.

Veterinarian Takes Baby To Work

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BREEZEWOOD (Bedford Co.)—"I never dreamed it would work out this well," says petite, dark-haired, Dr. Lisa Doherty as she plucks two-month-old Amy Katelyn from her car seat outside the llama barn of Joan Mellott.

"I've always wanted to be a vet, but when I got married a few years ago, I also found I wanted to be a mother. Then, while I was pregnant, I looked into day care options and just didn't like what was available for newborns. I wanted to take care of her myself."

Lisa did give up her full-time job at the Veterinary Medical Center. Then, just four days home from the hospital she got a call to geld a horse. "I found it a welcome change," she admits. "I was already getting tired of wandering around the house waiting for the baby to wake up."

Then others, like the Mellotts, who found Dr. Doherty to be especially good with llamas called. When my husband wasn't home, I started taking Amy along and have found it works out well," she says.

"I always tell my clients that I have to bring my baby along and they say, 'No problem, we love babies.'"

Recently she was called to deliver a calf in the middle of the night. Her husband's strength would be needed so, they both packed up Amy and took her along. The family took the baby into the house and enjoyed her so much they didn't want to give her back.

Another time, a 14-year-old boy offered to hold the baby while Lisa checked a cow.

Actually she admits that it might be easier now than when she was pregnant. She still recalls the night she was called out in her sixth month of pregnancy to aid with a prolapsed uterus.

The cow was located in the midst of a stand of trees about two miles off the main road. Hysterics were being produced by the cow's owner and Dr. Lisa didn't know who would give her the worst problem.

After locating the cow, she managed to get a rope around her neck. The cow, not really prefer-

ring the confined feeling took off with Lisa, the farmer, and his wife all hanging on. "I never told them I was pregnant," she laughs now.

"Anyway, we got the uterus fixed and I gratefully accepted a cup of coffee and a place to clean up. Then, came the big question. Could I help with a sister-in-law who was miscarrying and wouldn't go to the hospital. I told them I was sorry, but I drew the line at humans. I don't think they ever did understand why I couldn't do something for a human if I could save a cow. But, I did give them my best advice, 'call an ambulance.'"

Lisa grew up in a suburban area of Florida but always loved animals. At age 11, she began assisting a neighborhood vet and it was a dream she never erased from her mind. Her immediate goal was to be a wildlife conservationist.

However, jobs in the field were scarce and pay low, so she went back to school and became a medical technician.

"But, a few years later, I still felt the call of the animals and knew I would never be satisfied if I didn't become a vet."

Fresh out of veterinary school, Lisa entered the Peace Corps where she was sent to Morocco. Her main patients were camels, sheep, goats, and mules.

"We didn't study much about camels in vet school," she muses now, "but, I did do all the studying I could do on my own before going. Just let me say this about veterinary work, camels are horrendous. They have huge mouths and are not a treat to doctor. Fortunately, I didn't have a lot of calls. Most of them were military camels."

Despite being in a country that considers women as second-class citizens, Lisa found she was readily accepted. "The women accepted me and so did the men. But, I always kept my head, arms, and legs covered, so they

approved.

"Once in a while I would get a call and the farmer would say, 'Well, little lady, what are you doing in those big boots?'"

"Treating your animal' would be my quick response, and from there on I never had any trouble.

Lisa always knew she could have better hours, more comfortable working conditions, and higher pay if she would work strictly as a small animal vet in a big city.

"But, it's not the same," she is quick to say, "I love the variety of being a country vet. I love talking with the farmers and I empathize with the problems they face today. I wouldn't trade what I do here for anything. Besides, this is where I met my husband, Patrick."

Patrick is an automobile mechanic, but enjoys accompanying his wife on calls when possible. "His strength is a big help with large animals," Lisa says.

Despite loving her work, Lisa is always aware of the dangers of working on large animals. "You have to plan ahead," she says. "And, use restraints. Also, you never want to hurt an animal so it's best to give them anesthesia when possible."

Eventually, Lisa says she will probably return to her job at the Everett Center where she gives a lot of credit to Drs. Tarpley and Foor for helping her with her career. "They have always been willing to send me to seminars to study more about some of the exotic animals we are seeing today such as llamas," she says.

Lisa has a llama of her own, a gift from her client, Joan Mellott of La Malot Farm.

Until Amy reaches the toddler stage, Lisa says she is thankful to be in a situation where she can work and take care of her baby all at the same time.

Chubby, glowing, baby Amy, seems to find the situation just as agreeable.

Pa.'s New Living Will Law

Pennsylvania has adopted a living will law, The Advanced Directive for Health Care Act of 1992, giving people the right to legally choose the modern technology they want employed to keep them

alive. An informational fact sheet on the new law can be obtained from your State Senator's office or by calling the Lancaster County Cooperative Extension office at 717-394-6851.

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