

Sign your herd up for a wellness check



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It's the darnedest thing. After feeling miserable for a couple weeks with a sinus thing that just wouldn't go away, I went to the doctor thinking a round of antibiotics might get me back on track. I came home with a lecture on my posture and lack of exercise, and a prescription to do neck retraction exercises to open up my sinuses.

Really? I might feel more like exercising if I could breathe, thank you.

Six months later I go in for a wellness exam feeling great and thinking Doc will be happy to hear that I am going to be dieting and exercising for an office pound plunge. For once, I might get his approval.

Ha! I get a lecture on not dieting.

"Just focus on the exercise," he says, then signs me up for a CT heart scan because some number on my labs was a tick higher than the preferred range. Well, I tell you, I passed that exam with flying colors —

absolutely 0 plaque buildup.

If you're thinking I don't like going to the doctor's office, you're right. I tend not to go until I feel like I'm half dead. If it weren't for the insurance-prescribed wellness checks, I would go even less often. If I could just get the lab results and avoid the visit, I would.

Maybe we humans have a little of that prey instinct in us that tends to make us hide our health imperfections until we're so ill we'd do anything to be better. The fact of the matter is, we know better. Whether human or bovine, correctly diagnosing a problem relies on comparing "ill" to "normal." And that requires a history to establish what baseline normal is.

To get a correct diagnosis in the heat of a disease outbreak, your veterinarian needs to have a good idea of your herd's baseline normal. Establish that veterinary client-patient relationship (VCPR) for all that it can be, and let your veterinarian be a partner in your herd wellness program.

Insurance companies don't cover wellness checks at no cost to you for your sake. They help prevent costly health problems down the road. The same holds for your herd, only it's not the insurance company that will be paying the bill to resolve a pneumonia problem, a scour outbreak, or a bovine viral diarrhea (BVD) issue. You may be losing money due to lost performance for a health issue you can't detect, but trends in those baseline comparisons could alert you to a problem before your herd requires major surgery.

I have to admit, those neck retraction exercises do open up my sinuses and get rid of headaches. And, with that CT scan, maybe Doc was just making sure my heart could handle the AFC Championship. |

At the wire:

On Jan. 23, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Department of the Army (Army) finalized the Navigable Waters Protection Rule, defining "waters of the United States" (WOTUS). The agencies streamlined the definition to include four simple categories of jurisdictional waters, provided clear exclusions for many water features that traditionally have not been regulated, and defined terms in the regulatory text that have never been defined before.

"President Trump is restoring the rule of law and empowering Americans by removing undue burdens and strangling regulations from the backs of our productive farmers, ranchers, and rural landowners," said U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue. "The days are gone when the federal government can claim a small farm pond on private land as navigable waters."

To learn more about EPA's WOTUS Rule, visit <http://bit.ly/newWOTUS>.

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