



VCPR: What is it and why do you need one?

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The dairy industry likes acronyms, TMR, AI, DIM, ET, DOA, the list could go on and on. Veterinarian-Client-Patient-Relationship or VCPR has become a buzz word and is generating a lot of questions. The National FARM program, Version 3.0, has announced that starting January 1st, 2017, all farms participating must have a signed VCPR.

What is a VCPR?

The VCPR is a signed document between the veterinarian, and dairy producer (client) representing how they will work together to ensure the health and welfare of cattle (patient).

According to the American Veterinary Medical Association (2013) the VCPR is the basis for interaction among veterinarians, their clients, and their patients. A VCPR means that all of the following are required:

1. The veterinarian has assumed responsibility for making clinical judgments regarding the health of the patient and the client has agreed to follow the veterinarians' instructions.
2. The veterinarian has sufficient knowledge of the patient to initiate at least a general or preliminary diagnosis of the medical condition of the patient. This means that the veterinarian is personally acquainted with the keeping and care of the patient by virtue of a timely examination of the patient by the veterinarian, animal(s), or medically appropriate and timely visits by the veterinarian to the operation where the patient is managed.
3. The veterinarian is readily available for follow-up evaluation or has arranged for the following: veterinary emergency coverage, and continuing care and treatment.

4. The veterinarian provides oversight of treatment, compliance, and outcome.
5. Patient records are maintained.

Beyond the signed document, dairy farm owners and veterinarians need to work together and build a customized agreement that specifies how they work together (who's responsible for what) and how they communicate with each other.

Why is a VCPR important and why is the National FARM program putting an emphasis on having one?

Veterinarians and dairy farm owners are entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring the health and well-being of dairy cows and the safety of their contribution to the food supply. A close working relationship between farmers and veterinarians provides a strong foundation of a herd health plan.

Verification of this relationships – a signed and dated document – allows us to ensure the consumers, as well as regulatory agencies, that animal care is important to us and that best practices are being implemented between farms and veterinarians.

Please direct questions and comments to:

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