

# Introduction: Clinical Evaluation of Livestock

**Melissa R. Finley, DVM, PhD, DACVIM**  
**Sandia National Laboratories**

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# Clinical Evaluation

- **The clinical evaluation is the animal health expert's most important tool**
- **The evaluator must collect as many “clues” as possible in order to determine the cause of illness**
  - Historical information
  - Observation of the animal
  - Observation of the animal's environment
  - Physical examination
  - Ancillary tests



***“The clinical examination is an art, not a science. The basic structure of the clinical examination can be taught, but the actual performance and interpretation require practice and experience. The clinical examination is a search for clues in an attempt to solve the mystery of a patient’s illness.”***

***Rebhun’s Diseases of Dairy Cattle***





# Introduction to the Clinical Examination

- **The clinical examination**
  - Collecting a meaningful history
  - Observation from a distance
  - Performing a thorough physical examination
    - **Animal**
    - **Environment**
  - Develop a list of differential diagnoses
  - Selecting the most appropriate ancillary tests or tools
    - **Availability**
    - **Cost**
  - The rate at which these steps are performed is determined by the condition of the animal being examined



# Collecting a Meaningful History



- **Components of a meaningful history are dependent on the case but the examiner should collect as much relevant information as possible**
- **What are the components of a meaningful history?**





# Physical Examination

- **There is no one correct way to conduct a physical examination**
- **The examiner should use a method that lends consistency**
  - Perform the examination the same every time
  - Consistent methods prevent oversight
  - What are some plausible methods/strategies that support consistency?



- **The examiner should always begin by watching the animal from a distance prior to initiating the hands on examination**
  - What can be learned from watching the animal at a distance?



# Preliminary List of Differentials

- **Integrate the information obtained from the general observation, historical information, and physical examination**
- **Create a list of problems**
- **Integrate the list of problems in to a list of possible disorders/diseases**
- **Ancillary tests and tools can be used to help narrow your list of possible diseases/disorders**



# Ancillary Tests and Tools

- **A number of inexpensive ancillary tests and tools are available to livestock veterinarians to help arrive at a diagnosis**
  - What are some tools that food animal/livestock veterinarians have available?
  - When would you use these tests?



# Develop a List of Differential Diagnoses

- **Integrate the information from:**
  - History
  - Observations
  - Physical examination
  - Ancillary tools
- **Use all of the relevant information collected to create a short list of differential diagnoses**
- **Response to therapy**



# Summary

- **There are several components of a thorough clinical examination**
  - General observation
  - Historical information
  - Physical examination
  - Develop a problem list and create a list of differential diagnoses
  - Ancillary tests
  - Final list of probable diseases/disorders
  - Response to therapy