

# Valleywide News



VALLEYWIDE VETERINARY SERVICES

## Is it Worth Casting a Broken Leg?

Dr. Elizabeth Martens

If a calf or heifer breaks their leg, they can still live a productive life! If an animal is a good candidate, we will reduce the fracture and place a fiberglass cast. Most bones will be healed in 6-8 weeks, ready for the cast to be removed and the animal to live a normal, pain free life.



**1) Is the fracture below the knee or below the hock?** *In general, fractures lower on the leg and farther away from joints are easier to fix. These are the best candidates for fixing with a cast.*

**2) Has the skin been broken?** *If the skin is broken and you can see bone, it is unlikely that we will be able to cast the bone without significant risk of infection. If the bone is not exposed we may still need to see the animal several times to remove the cast, dress the wound, and replace the cast.*

**3) How old is the animal?** *The younger the animal the better, but up to 12 months of age can have a good prognosis. Adult animals may be successfully casted, but they are more likely to have catastrophic bone damage associated with the great amount of force required to break their fully developed bones. Follow up care for an adult cow is also much more challenging but critical to avoid secondary injury.*

**4) How long ago did the fracture happen?** *If you decide to get a broken bone casted, call the veterinarian immediately. Casting should happen within 12 hours of the fracture but the sooner the better.*

Animals in casts should live in a clean, dry area with minimal room to move around. Ideally they would be housed individually. They should be monitored daily for any changes in how they are eating, behaving and using the casted leg.

If your animal is a good candidate and you are prepared to provide the aftercare needed, repairing a simple fracture is usually a good financial decision. As with most of our services, cost is based on time it takes to do the job plus medications and supplies. Estimate \$250-350 but know it could be more with any complications.



2562 VT-22A  
Bridport, VT 05734

Phone: 802-758-6888

E-mail:  
Valleywidevets  
@gmail.com

[www.valleywidevets.com](http://www.valleywidevets.com)

Dr. Dave Rockwell  
Dr. Elizabeth Martens  
Dr. Stephanie Bandoski  
Dr. Emma Cijka

Krystal Ingwersen

### Backorder Update

Barvac CD/T - all sizes  
Covexin - all sizes  
Calvary 9 - all sizes  
Oxytet 100 - all sizes  
Cefiflex - 4g & 1g  
Estrumate - all sizes  
J-Vac – 10 dose  
Express 10 HB - all sizes  
Guardian - all sizes  
Coronavirus - all sizes  
Ultrabac 7 - all sizes  
Terramycin Scour Tabs 100 ct.

### Allocation

Tri-shield  
Spectramast LC  
Spectramast DC  
Dexamethasone 250mL

## FARM 5.0 - More Than a Pile of Cumbersome Paperwork

### Dr. Elizabeth Martens

FARM 5.0 went into effect July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024 and will last until 2027. Unlike version 4.0, there are not many big changes that will affect farmers. Here's what you need to know:

While the FARM program may seem like a cumbersome pile of paperwork, it is there to protect farms in case of a claim of animal abuse or misunderstanding of farm practices. Consumers have never been further removed from the food system and farms and milk processors are vulnerable to public perception. In order to build and maintain a market for dairy products we need to be open and honest about all aspects of the industry.

Treat FARM as an opportunity to make sure you are up to date with industry standards for animal care. This should be an ongoing discussion with your vet and other farm advisors about best practices and what new innovations and research is telling us about how things can and should be done.

**1) Euthanasia of cattle older than 4 months of age is not permitted with a .22 gauge long rifle.** It is not a large enough caliber to consistently provide instant lack of consciousness and painless death that qualifies as "euthanasia". .22 Magnum or larger caliber, as well as high power muzzle energy (greater than 300-foot pounds) are ideal. There are many types of firearms that qualify, please ask if you aren't sure about the one you use. **Additionally, farms need at least 2 individuals that are trained and comfortable performing euthanasia.** The secondary person may be a neighbor or the vet, but there must be someone trained and able to put an animal down without delay even if the primary person is not available. We owe the animals under our care a prompt, painless and peaceful end. Talk to your vet if you're not sure the best way to euthanize animals on your farm.

**2) Adequate immune transfer from colostrum needs to be proven for ALL calves.** This may be from an ongoing log of colostrum quality, quantity and time given to each calf or may be done by testing blood total proteins from several calves under 7 days of age. This applies to calves sold off the farm as well as those to be raised. Making sure all calves have passive transfer of immunity is the ultimate way to prevent disease and maximize lifetime productivity of your animals!

**3) Lameness in the milking cow herd may not exceed 15% with mild to moderate (score 2) lameness as well as the existing benchmark of less than 5% of cows with severe lameness.** Take advantage of your FARM auditor collecting this information to help monitor change over time on your farm.



#### **Cow Euthanasia Options (not an exhaustive list):**

- Rifle or Handgun: .22 Magnum or Hornet .38 special .357 magnum or 9mm
- Shotgun: 12, 16 or 20 gauge
- Penetrating captive bolt gun

\*Solid point bullets are recommended for safety. If using shot shells, be close enough that the BB's make contact with the skull as a single mass.

#### **Blitz Penetrating Captive Bolt Gun**

This is a safe alternative to firearms because there is no projectile. The metal bolt is fired and retracted back into the barrel instantly. These are preferred by slaughterhouses and many veterinarians. Talk to your vet about pros and cons, for help purchasing the right tool and charges, and for training on how to use it.

