

# *New Website Aids On-Farm Disease Diagnosis*

*Julie Severidt, CVMBS, Class of 2004  
CSU-ILM*

Over the past few years' dairy producers have learned a tremendous amount about management of dairy cattle. With this knowledge, has come better nutrition and milking practices. However, the practice of recognizing disease in the herd has taken the back burner. Many diseases have similar signs and may respond to the same treatment; thus, the producer may never know exactly what diseases are affecting the herd.

A necropsy is an examination of an animal's internal organs after death in order to determine the cause of death. Well executed necropsies are an important aspect of your herd health plan because it allows one to identify more specifically the diseases and their causative organisms in the herd. With this knowledge the effectiveness of herd health management schemes may be reevaluated and further refined. Veterinarians are trained to do necropsies but they may not always be available near or at the time of death when tissues are best evaluated. On-farm personnel can be trained to do necropsies, make observations, and take samples.

Dr Frank Garry and myself, both part of the Integrated Livestock Management program at CSU, have created a dairy cow necropsy manual for producers available on-line. The manual includes information on what a necropsy is, where to properly perform a necropsy, as well as how to perform the necropsy. To better illustrate the technique, the manual includes digital photographs and short video clips. Information about disinfectants, euthanasia, whole carcass composting, and sample collecting is also included. To enable the producer to gain a better understanding of what diseased tissues look like, there is a section for each major organ system showing common lesions. Linked to these sections is what normal tissues should look like. Right now there are only a few organ systems that contain information about common lesions, but information is continuously being added. In the future we hope to have a book version of the manual that will include a short video on a CD or VHS tape that will show a necropsy from beginning to end.

It is our hope that the information in this manual will enable the dairy producer to work more closely with his/her veterinarian. It is not our intention to make the producer a veterinarian or diagnostician, but to put them in a position to collect samples correctly for a veterinarian to analyze and make a diagnosis. With the information the veterinarian can obtain from the necropsy samples, the producer and the veterinarian will be able to evaluate the operations' herd health program and make informed decisions concerning the herd's overall health.

The manual can be accessed through the Integrated Livestock Management website at [www.cvmbs.colostate.edu/ilm/necropsy/\\_notes/index.html](http://www.cvmbs.colostate.edu/ilm/necropsy/_notes/index.html) It works best on newer computers with at least a 56 K modem and QuickTime. If you do not have a newer computer or have a slower modem, a CD will soon be available.

For more information on this resource, contact Julie Severidt at [jseverid@lamar.colostate.edu](mailto:jseverid@lamar.colostate.edu) or Dr. Frank Garry at [fgarry@lamar.colostate.edu](mailto:fgarry@lamar.colostate.edu)