

The Bandera PROPHECT

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Elementary students interview mobile veterinarian

By The Bandera 4-H Veterinary Science Class
Special to the Prophet

The Bandera 4-H Veterinarian Science students were thrilled at the opportunity to interview Veterinarian Dr. Steve Sells at their January monthly meeting. The students, grades 3 – 5, asked Dr. Sells many questions about what life is like as a large animal veterinarian.

Dr. Sells told many stories and shared information which were both educational and inspiring. Did you know his most unusual large animal he cared for was a rhinoceros? Horses are his favorite. What he likes most about being a mobile veterinarian is being outdoors.

He informed the students there was a great shortage of large animal veterinarians. Texas A&M University had been the only accredited veterinarian school in Texas until recently. Texas Tech School of Veterinary Medicine in Lubbock opened a second veterinarian school in 2022. Dr. Sells reported the competition is tremendous and advised the 4-H students they have to have a strong academic record along with some involvement in animal programs and some “real life” animal skills. The students then went and checked out Dr. Sells’ “mobile office” – his “truck.”

Here Dr. Sells has everything he needs to perform his animal evaluations and procedures. He also has his computer, printer, and other office materials to complete his work. When asked about what the client can do to help Dr. Sells’ visit go smoother, he said, “Have the animal already caught and ready to be looked at.” As there are not many mobile large animal veterinarians, Dr. Sells is one busy veterinarian, and anything the animal owner can do to have everything ready for him really helps him get to his next client.

The 4-H student Veterinarian Science program is geared towards students interested in a career as a veterinary assistant or as preparatory training to prepare for a future career as a veterinarian. Students may receive a veterinary technician certificate through Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Veterinary Medicine. They must complete 100 lessons and 500 hours of Apprenticeship. Graduates of this program are eligible to take the exam for certification through the Texas Veterinary Medical Association (TVMA). Bandera 4-H just started this program last year and students in grades 3 – 5 are currently able to attend this program. Grades 6 – 8 will be added next year.