

Herd Nutritionist

Herd nutritionists determine feed rations, conduct research, and consult with farmers regarding feeding practices for their animals. Herd nutritionists mainly work with dairy, beef, sheep, or goat herds for cooperatives or feed operation companies.

What responsibilities will I have?

- Consider the varied nutritional needs of animals in question and formulate balanced feed rations based on nutritional requirements of the animals
- Assess condition of animals as well as level of activity and physiological demands (productivity, performance, reproductive needs, growth and/pr. lactation requirements, or need for weight gain or loss) depending on season, temperature, and hair coat
- Utilize computer programs specifically created for particular species of livestock to formulate the best, low-cost rations for a client
- Involvement in research of teaching activities, from conducting work in conjunction with livestock veterinarians, animal health technicians, to working with industry research groups and scientists, such as meat scientists
- Regularly call on and service company clients and customers
- Provide technical training to customers and sales representatives
- Understand and apply the data available to support animal performance enhancement technologies
- Work with feed production team to develop new feed products and ensure highest level of quality of feeds sold and produced for sale
- Build and maintain relationships and influence with others including nutritionists, meat scientists, veterinarians, packing plant employees, and extension or university personnel
- Determine the effectiveness of dietary regimes
- Carry out sales and marketing strategies to promote products
- Understand trends in the industry and changes to governmental regulations

What education and training is necessary?

A bachelor's or master's degree in animal science or animal nutrition is necessary to become a herd nutritionist.

What high school courses are recommended?

Agriculture education, animal science, anatomy, biology, chemistry, mathematics, business, and computer courses

Who are typical employers in agriculture?

Cooperatives, private feed yards (depending on species), veterinarians, and self-employed contractors

Other Titles and Roles:

Livestock Production Specialist, Dairy Production Specialist, Ruminant Nutritionist