



MOBILE TECH REVOLUTIONIZING VET-PRODUCER RELATIONS

Smart technology for cow-calf production

Cody Creelman is the face of a new beef generation. The young veterinarian is a partner in Veterinary Agri-Health Services Ltd., a thriving beef practice at Airdrie, Alta. He is also a passionate believer in the use of mobile technology in his work.

Already a fixture in the feedlot industry, high tech is set to revolutionize the cow-calf industry next, says Creelman. That's not speculation. It's what he lives every day. The clinic does roughly a third of its work in each of cow-calf, feedlot and research activities.

SPEEDY COMMUNICATIONS

The biggest change comes simply from the speed and sophistication of communications, says Creelman. There's been a huge growth in the beef industry use of smartphones and related devices such as tablets.

High-quality photo and video options allow a client to send a visual of a problem to their vet. "It gives us the jump on diagnosis, allows us to dispatch help if needed, or better prepare for assistance at a clinic," says Creelman.

NEW WORLD OF METRICS

Perhaps the biggest new tech potential is the world of metrics management. Creelman's practice developed feedlot management software. Now it has developed software for the commercial cow-calf industry.

"When we realized how many of our cli-

ents were using smartphones and mobile devices, we made the decision to build our latest software on a mobile platform to give them true in-the-field management."

The software is in its second year of use and meeting solid reviews by clients and other veterinarians.

The system allows producers to input data at the speed at which cattle are processed. Most use a tablet or Android smartphone. Data is entered at the same time animals are being preg tested or vaccinated. When the work at chuteside is done, records are instantly updated and usable with no need to download and manipulate later.

MORE FROM YOUR VET

There are many benefits to this new system, but one of the biggest is that it allows a much higher-quality relationship with your vet, says Creelman. You are working with actual numbers, not estimates. You can do it instantaneously and with complete mobility.

A first benefit producers discover is it shows exactly how many animals are in the herd, and other relevant data such as age distribution and calf inventory.

One of many examples is a treatment screen. "If a person enters the ID for a calf weighing 700 pounds with a joint infection, they get a suggested treatment," says Creelman. "It gives the dose, the injection route and the withdrawal times, all proper treatment protocols set out by their vet."



Smartphone technology can help efforts in animal health and improve ability to diagnose, says Dr. Cody Creelman (l) of Airdrie, Alta.

There are many customizable reports such as calving intervals — how many born in the first, second or third cycle. "We can show the economics of that and suggest pre-breeding nutrition management changes to fine tune the program."

Another example is body condition scoring. Estimating that is tough, but actually measuring animals and entering that data tells producers exactly what their herd is doing. The same applies to herd mortality and morbidity.

PROGRAM SUPPORT

On an industry level, new technology has the potential to strengthen industry programs such as the Verified Beef Production program with sophisticated options to meet sustainability standards.

New technology also allows a fresh approach for the beef industry to reach out to the world and tell our story, says Creelman.

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