



NEW HERD HEALTH PROGRAM DRIVES NEXT GENERATION PROGRESS

Saskatchewan vet group launches innovative producer project

Dr. Sam Wauer is a proud player in what he believes is the next generation of beef cow-calf herd health care in the industry.

As a graduate of the Western College of Veterinary Medicine, Wauer joined the South West Animal Health Centre in Swift Current, Sask., a couple of years ago. That group has seven large animal vets on staff and a strong beef cow-calf clientele stretching across a large swath of productive prairie landscape.

By any definition it is a progressive, modern practice. “Yet what we were finding was that the way in which traditional veterinary services were offered was falling short of where these producers wanted to go to expand their operation,” says Wauer.

Brainstorming ideas on how they could change to meet those needs, the vet group started an entirely new herd health program based on what producers had identified as their needs.

“It wasn’t necessarily about reinventing the wheel because a lot of the services we offer under herd health are traditional vet services,” says Wauer. But it was a new delivery model built around proactive, preventative health measures.

HOW IT WORKS

Today, 11 clients with approximately 4,000 breeding animals are enrolled in the project pilot phase.

There are six modules to the program: Nutrition, biosecurity, parasite monitoring,



Dr. Sam Wauer: “More formal platform, better vet-client relationship.”

reproduction and pregnancy checking. The sixth is record-keeping with a goal of moving producers to a specialized electronic custom record-keeping service offered by the clinic.

Each herd gets five on-farm visits annually. Four are designed around the times a vet would normally be there such as semen testing or preg checking. One visit is a pre-weaning calf crop exam. This year plans are for vets to visit during branding.

A fifth visit is a wild card choice of the producer. “That could be anything from a disease outbreak to staff training, whatever the producer chooses,” says Wauer.

COMMUNICATIONS, BILLING

Communication is key. One vet is assigned to each client so that nothing falls through the cracks. The seven vets then schedule a joint weekly meeting. “Each of our vets has a different background and skillset so it is really value to have the opportunity to share ideas on each of the issues in each of the herds,” says Wauer.

Both vets and producers learn from this experience. Necropsies give solid information. The record-keeping package allows producers to track information on mobile devices. And it allows vets to access those records remotely from the clinic.

Access to all records allows vets to identify opportunities for individual producers but also the entire group. This year they identified a copper deficiency across most herds.

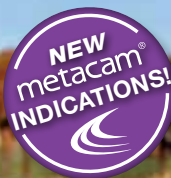
For all of this, producers are charged a per-animal fee based on cow numbers at pregnancy checking. Mileage is included as well as discounts for diagnostics. Emergencies are additional.

VBP+ LINKS

The new model fits naturally with industry efforts, says Wauer.

“We want to be able to facilitate the rate of progress for producers to reach their goals. But also to affect the uptake of programs like VBP and accelerate how our beef industry is going to evolve.”

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