Whisper® & ROI

Defining an ROI for a diagnostic test is difficult. It is easy to talk about a $25.00 return on a $1.25 growth implant, but what is the ROI provided by an X-Ray machine or a blood test, or Whisper?

The slide below is one that we have shown when answering the Whisper ROI question. Even with data available to support the ROI, the slide has had more skeptics than converts. What the slide fails to explain is the “why” behind the dramatic reduction in mortality rates achieved by Whisper. Keep in mind that Whisper is a diagnostic tool providing an assessment of lung health. It is the understanding and response to the unique individual Lung Scores (LS) provided by Whisper that leads to better health management and treatment success.

Whisper & mortality reduction

Following Whisper® Introduction
Non-Auscultation vs. Auscultation

- 13.07% vs. 8.48% mortality rate reduction
- Practical Application: This data tells us that 1 animal with BVD can be expected to survive for every 21.8 animals auscultated at their first hospital treatment pull.

Hospital Pull Practices of 24,067 Head
Survey of 116,415 head
Obviously there can be many approaches and applications of the diagnostic LS provided by Whisper. Some of the key applications and benefits behind the ROI success are:

- Diagnostic Accuracy
- Improved Treatment Decisions and Interventions...
- Improvement in the pen rider feedback loop
- Sick pen management

**Diagnostic Accuracy**

It has been reported that 75% of all illness (morbidity) in the feedlot is due to Bovine Respiratory Disease Complex (BRD). Without Whisper we lack the ability to separate out the non-BRD illnesses. Whisper assists in improving individual case diagnosis and thus better aligns the right treatment with the right disease or medical condition.

**Improved Treatment Decisions**

Historically, most treatment protocols for feedlot BRD have been based on rectal temperature. A typical treatment protocol initiates antibiotic therapy when the rectal temperature meets or exceeds 104-104.5. New treatment protocols utilizing Whisper LS begin treating cattle as soon as their LS is 2 or greater, regardless of temperature.

**Improvement in the Pen Rider Feedback Loop**

A common question from pen riders to doctors is "Were my pulls hot?" Without Whisper, the only immediate, objective measurement of a pen rider's work for the day is the presence of fever. After a week or two, the number of animals that needed retreated or died also indicates a pen rider's performance for a day.

Introducing Whisper into this loop gives a pen rider another immediate feedback mechanism for the day. In our data sets, more than 50% of the pulled animals have a rectal temperature less than 104.5. There is also no appreciable change in the pull rate. The presence of so many pulls without a fever indicates that Whisper has given the pen riders confidence in what they are observing by not being heavily constrained to identify fevered cattle.

**Sick Pen Management**

Without Whisper, the go-home decision has typically relied upon the intuition of the doctor. The LS data provided by Whisper provides objective evidence that the treatment has been effective and the animal has truly improved. (Example LS 3 have improved to a LS 2 or 1). Whisper data assists caregivers in the critical management of the sick pen and improves the "go-home" process.

**Summary**

The introduction of Whisper and the Lung Score data it provides is the first truly objective diagnostic tool available to the feedlot veterinarian and animal caregivers. Outward signs and rectal temperature are not as accurate as Whisper. Whisper provides a significant leap forward in improving the success in diagnosis and care of feedlot cattle with BRD.
There is great variability from one feedyard to another and thus one should not expect a “one size fits all” result from the use of Whisper. The proper use and application of Whisper data will reduce feedlot mortality. Given the cost of cattle today, any reduction in mortality represents thousands if not tens of thousands of dollars. With cattle at today’s prices, it is easy to see how mortality improvement achieved with Whisper can convert into a meaningful ROI.

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1 Data from this slide was compiled from 6 different feedyards over a period >12 months.


(http://agecon.okstate.edu/faculty/publications/3981.pdf)