



It's all about improved profitability!

It pays to be on DHI. Some consider only the costs, but thousands of others use DHI to increase milk production, to adjust feed rations so they have higher butterfat and protein values, to lower somatic cell counts and to pin-point where their herd falls short of others and could probably be improved.

DHI has always been a valuable service for compiling records for pedigrees and for genetic progress on both an individual and national herd basis. It's the treasure trove of data that artificial insemination units, foreign buyers and commercial dairy producers consult daily.

But DHI today offers services that improve day-to-day on-farm profits from commercial milk production and that, in the end, is probably worth more to the average dairy farmer than the genetic gains.

Great gains

Simply boosting milk production usually increases profits, but not always. There's more value when there are increases in butterfat and protein content, and reductions in somatic cell counts.

There is solid proof that these are areas where DHI clients do make gains. An analysis of 539 new DHI customers (see Table), found that their milk production increased by an average of five per cent (400 kilograms), their butterfat by 5.4



Dave Kuntz (left) of Inkendale Farms Ltd. in Walkerton, Ontario and herd manager Pat Logel. Service flexibility plays a big part in their decision to use DHI services.

per cent (16 kilograms) and their protein by 3.5 per cent (nine kilograms) in the 2 year period after they began DHI. Also impressive is that their somatic cell count dropped by an average 10 per cent during the same time frame.

George Morris Centre study shows that DHI clients have 20 to 22 per cent higher milk production per cow versus non-DHI herds.

Every year, a number of Ontario dairy herds are enlisted for detailed financial analysis as part of milk pricing in the province. The data for 2004 indicates milk revenues for the 15 producers at the bottom of the group were \$5,923 and for the top 15 were \$8,779, translating to net revenue of \$11.46 per hectolitre for the bottom 15 and \$22.69 per hectolitre for the top 15. The George Morris e, says

Centre, which is an independent think tank dealing in Canadian agriculture, says in one of their studies, that DHI clients have 20 to 22 per cent higher milk production per cow versus non-DHI herds.

More than just more milk

It's obvious from the data that DHI clients are getting more milk revenue and profit from their cows.

Simply increasing milk production alone doesn't always pay because some of the highest producers don't put enough butterfat and protein into their milk. It takes DHI to pick out the cows whose high production truly pays, and that's something that isn't done by automatic systems that measure and record only weights.

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SCC Data Tops List

Dr. Ken Leslie is a big fan of DHI's SCC service. He's a member of the Department of Population Medicine at the Ontario Veterinary College at the University of Guelph and has a birds-eye view of the Canadian dairy industry. His specialty is mastitis management.

"A major strength of DHI SCC data is the fact that it is measured routinely, without request, on every cow that is milking."

"Mastitis continues to be a very costly disease for the Canadian dairy industry. In my opinion, the use of DHI SCC data to monitor udder health status is an integral step in limiting the impact of this problem. A major strength of DHI SCC data is the fact that it is measured routinely, without request, on every cow that is milking. Furthermore, this information is returned to the herd in a format that is extremely useful for determining the frequency and distributions of cows with elevated SCC, as well as any changes in udder health status. As an ongoing monitoring tool, DHI SCC data is very difficult to beat, especially when used in conjunction with the Dairy Comp 305 Herd Advisor management program."

Sometimes bulk tank SCCs are high because of only a few bad apples in the herd. Knowing which cows are responsible makes it possible to either deal with them or cull them. But that's only a beginning. For example, the SCC data can also be analyzed to find out whether the cows that have just freshened have significantly higher scores. If so, that might be an area where corrections to the dry cow program, or early lactation program, can be made.

Profitability (Continued from page 1)

Knowing butterfat and protein contents and ratios is the basis for adjusting feed rations to improve profitability. That's become more important since marketing boards now set standards for solids non fat:fat ratios and charge penalties.

Added flexibility

DHI has become more flexible which has brought some farmers who quit in the past back into the fold. Among them is Allen Kampman of Kambro Farms Ltd. at Abbotsford, B.C., a business that involves brothers and their families operating a 450-cow herd.

"With DHI information, you are able to look at cows that need attention. We're definitely more profitable on a per cow basis because of that."

Wes Kuntz, Ikendale Farms,
Walkerton, ON

"When we quit DHI in 1994, one of the main reasons was because of the inflexible rules and guidelines that were required at that time," says Kampman. "In the last few years, DHI has made some changes in terms of service flexibility which is definitely a step in the right direction. We came back on routine DHI testing in October 2005 and we're happy with our decision."

Another returning client is Ikendale Farms at Walkerton, Ontario, a 325-

cow herd operated by Dave and Peter Kuntz and their families. They came back on DHI in March, 2001.

"DHI changed their service options to add more flexibility into their programs so we had the ability to customize and use the services we wanted to use," says Wes Kuntz. "Dairy Comp management software was probably one of the biggest reasons we came back. Plus, we wanted to get back into SCC testing and generating production records." Kuntz added, "With DHI information you are able to look at 15 to 25 cows that need attention instead of 325 cows. We are definitely more profitable on a per cow basis because of that. The information gives you a true picture of what's happening in the herd in terms of production and component trends. Basically, the more information you have, the better decisions you are going to make."

Many DHI clients turn their DHI records over to their nutritionist and veterinarian who use them to improve rations, herd health management and reproductive performance. It all pays.

DHI compiles industry-wide records and averages and some sharp-eyed farmers use that as a quick and easy way to pick some management areas that are likely to pay relatively quick and easy dividends.

DHI does cost money, but it's an investment that definitely pays!

New customers see excellent return on investment

- ▶ Since January 1, 2000, (the start of the new flexible DHI program), DHI in CanWest area has signed up 711 new herds.
- ▶ 69% of herds enrolled on Management Service vs 31% on Publishable.
- ▶ 78% of herds enrolled on 10 test or greater per year while 22% selected less than 10 test per year.
- ▶ Of the 711 new herds, 539 have been new DHI clients for **at least 2 years or more**. An analysis of these new customers shows the following:

Average...	DHI Start	2 years later	Change	Change (%)
305 milk (kg)	7,956	8,356	+400	+5.0%
305 fat (kg)	299	315	+16	+5.4%
305 prot (kg)	257	266	+9	+3.5%
SCC ('000)	269	242	-27	-10.0%

It pays to test



In my 26 years with DHI as a customer and board member, I have seen, and have experienced,

many changes to the organization and service programs. As an example, the use of computers has dramatically altered and improved the delivery of DHI services. Ten years ago, DHI staff started loading information directly into computers right in the barn, downloading the data electronically to the processing center, sending reports back to the farm via the internet with downloads directly into the on-farm computer. Reports that used to take weeks to get back to the farm can now be delivered in days.

Testing options have also evolved with flexibility being the key word. Rigid rules and guidelines have been replaced with flexible testing options that can be tailored to fit almost any dairy operation's requirement.

One thing that hasn't changed over the years - it still pays to test. Higher, more

On average, new herds on DHI show an increase in production, including components of 5% and a reduction of SCC of 10% within two years.

efficient production, means better profits. That's why 70% of the herds in the CanWest area use DHI services to help them improve their profitability. Whether you want to grow your milk cheque, or maintain it with fewer cows, DHI will help you achieve your goals.

New herds provide an excellent example of what testing with DHI can accomplish. On average, new herds on DHI show an increase in production, including components of 5% and a reduction of SCC of 10% within two years. Any way you want to calculate it, improvements like those will show an excellent return on investment.

More than ever dairy farming is big business. DHI is an excellent tool to help optimize production, milk quality and drive profits. Today with multiple component pricing and SNF ratios it is more important than ever to know

what and how much your cows are producing. Remember, you can't manage what you can't measure.

I have been with DHI for a long time and, as my latest three year term comes to an end, I will not be seeking re-election. I have enjoyed working with DHI at all levels: from the early years with the local Steinbach DHI, Manitoba MRC and Western DHI, and finally with CanWest DHI. I feel proud that these organizations not only survived the adversity that came our way, but actually thrived on it. Through formation of partnerships and mergers and continuous research and development, we now have a world class organization in CanWest DHI that is respected throughout North America and the world.

As the year draws to a close and another holiday season is near, I would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and an utterly fantastic New Year!

Ray Laing, Dairy Producer, Steinbach, MB
Chairman, CanWest DHI



CanWest DHI wishes you and your family a joyous holiday season, and a prosperous and happy new year!

REGIONAL NEWS

O N T A R I O

CanWest DHI Annual Meeting (Ontario Region)

Tuesday, January 9, 2007

Registration: 12:00 PM ■ Meeting: 1:00 PM

Fairmont Royal York, Toronto, Ontario



**LATE IN
REGISTRATIONS?
WE CAN HELP!**

We can register your calves/cows with Holstein Canada electronically on test day. If you already provide your breeding information to DHI, your DHI staff will only need the name of the calf, the NLID tag number and the management number of the calf to complete the registration application. Benefits include:

- **Accurate, timely registrations at any purity level**
- **No more paperwork for registrations**
- **No more late fees for registrations**
- **A \$3.00 Per-Application discount from Holstein Canada**

Detailed information and DHI fees for this service are available from DHI staff.



2007 CANWEST DHI HERD RECORDING CALENDAR

The 2007 CanWest DHI Herd Recording Calendar is a great way to record herd events such as calvings, breedings and dry dates. The calendar also provides space to record all health treatments in the herd, a requirement of the Dairy Farmers of Canada's Canadian Quality Milk (CQM) program. The DHI calendar is an approved recording system for the CQM program in all provinces.

The calendar will soon be available from your DHI field staff.

2007 HERD MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE

CONFERENCE TOPICS

**Avoiding Problems When
Feeding for High Production**
Dr. Mike Allen

**Non-Nutritional Considerations for
Your Transition Cow Program**
Dr. Ewen Ferguson

The Cause and Effects of High Acid Diets
Dr. Mike Allen

**Producer Perspective:
Managing the High Producing Herd**

January 16, 2007
Winchelsea Farms (Hwy #31 North)
Winchester, Ontario

January 17, 2007
PMD Community Centre
Drayton, Ontario

January 18, 2007
Tavistock Memorial Hall
Tavistock, Ontario

Regular Price: \$45.00

Early Bird Price: \$35.00 (PLUS GST)*
Pre-registration required by January 9, 2007

*\$20.00 fee will be charged for no-shows

*Prices include admission, lunch and
conference proceedings. For more information,
please call 1-800-549-4373.*

Information (Continued from page 6)

Herd information for Veterinarians, Nutritionists and Financial Advisors will not be released by DHI staff without explicit permission from the listed owner verbally, through a signed Data Release Form or by PIN number. As PIN numbers are unique to each herd, giving this number to a herd advisor is deemed to be the equivalent of providing a signed Release Form. When one of these allied professionals is assisting you with your dairy decisions, information can be sent to them by mail, fax, Internet or electronically (DAISY data file or Dairy Comp 305).

Ending the association of one of these parties is as simple as contacting the DHI Customer Service Desk (1-800-549-4373) and requesting that their access be discontinued. Where an advisor is using Dairy Comp 305 to retrieve your herd data, a change of PIN number can be accommodated to terminate access. Changing or resuming service must be done as noted above, with explicit permission.

Ensuring the security and confidentiality of your information is a top priority. If you have any concerns about who is receiving your data, want to know your PIN number or want to

make changes to limit or expand access to your data, please contact the DHI Customer Service Desk at 1-800-549-4373.



BETWEEN THE NUMBERS

Benchmarks for reproduction

BILL GREXTON, DHI HERD MANAGEMENT SERVICES

There are a number of measures for determining the success of dairy reproduction. However, many of them have biases or problems as a tool to use on the farm. For example, both 'Calving Interval' and 'Days Open' are calculated **ONLY** on animals that became pregnant and calved again. Reproductive failures were not included in the calculation.

When one considers that 18% of the over 160,000 cows culled in 2005-06 (almost 30,000 cows), were culled for reproductive reasons, you realize that measures that don't take into account these reproductive failures are not worthy of use.

More effective measures such as 'Pregnancy Rate (PR)', (which measures the percent of eligible heats in a 21 day period that ended in a pregnancy), 'DIM at 1st Breeding', or '% Cows Pregnant by 150 DIM', give you far more information for managing your herd.

Dairy Comp Herd Management Software - once reproductive data is entered - can calculate all of these measures for you whether you have the software on-farm or your Advisor or Field Staff gives it to you from their program.

Let's consider what is 'normal' in Canadian dairy herds (see table). The

figures were extracted from CanWest DHI data and are based on 2,918 herds which were determined to have adequate reproduction information.

Out of the three measures, the one that shows the most impact is **DIM @ 1st Breeding**. While many people claim that cows get bred on the first heat after 60 DIM, the reality is that cows get bred closer to the first heat **after** the animal reaches 75-80 DIM. This is still quite respectable.

While the goal of many dairymen is to get a cow ready to breed by 60 DIM, the reality is that it takes an average 93 DIM before the cow receives semen for the first time. On average, dairyman take an extra 20-22 days to get the cow through her transition program and all the stresses associated with calving and high milk production (93 minus half a cycle).

Remember that if the cow is to calve again with a 13 month CI, she needs to be pregnant by 115-120 DIM. With an average of two breedings per pregnancy (the CanWest average is 2.2), 80 DIM as a goal for first breeding gives you enough time if all heat cycles are observed. This gives the dairyman a chance to relax a bit and not rush the cows so hard through their transition period.

The larger reproductive issue in herds .

is the '**RANGE of DIM at 1st Breeding**' While the AVERAGE is 93 days, the average time **between** when the first cow and last cow both received semen for the first time is 50 days. Add that to the 50+/- days from first breeding to conception and this takes many of these cows well beyond your acceptable limit of when they should get pregnant.

If you want to improve reproductive performance, check those who are not getting bred in time and make sure they receive semen. **The pregnancy rate of cows not seeing semen is zero.**

Why not try it? Make some simple changes and you may indeed find yourself at the 75th PCTL (or higher), for pregnancy rate.

If you would like to know how your herd looks, ask your Advisor or DHI Field Staff to show you a Dairy Comp graph during your next test. (The command to run it is GRAPH BRED1 BY DIM FOR LACT>0.) The chart will show you on the vertical axis the range in when cows first receive semen within your herd, and on the horizontal axis, whether or not this has changed over the past year.

You can also get a list of animals that are past 150 DIM and not pregnant. (A sample report may be LIST %ID LACT DIM BCAM BRED1:7 TBRD RPRO FOR RC<5DIM>150 by DIM \).

	Pregnancy Rate (%)		DIM @ 1st Breeding		Range from 1st Service to Conception (days)		% Cows Pregnant by 150 DIM	
	50th PCTL	75th PCTL	50th PCTL	75th PCTL	50th PCTL	75th PCTL	50th PCTL	75th PCTL
CanWest	13	16	93	82	49	38	65	75
ON	13	16	91	81	50	39	65	75
MB	12	15	105	86	58	43	64	73
SK	12	15	99	84	54	39	63	73
AB	14	18	92	81	46	35	69	77
BC	12	16	100	89	46	34	66	76

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Where does my herd information go?

This is a question that has been asked in many forms for as long as milk recording has been around. Dairy producers want to know who gets to see their production information and how they can control the distribution of these same records.

Initially, milk weights are recorded and samples are taken by your DHI field staff. The weights and other relevant herd information is communicated to the Canadian DHI processing computers in Montreal while your samples go to the local DHI lab for analysis. When the lab has finished with the samples, they also communicate the data to the processing computer. The various pieces of information relating to your herd are combined, calculated and refined to produce the reports you receive by mail, via the Internet or electronically.

The lactation information for verified/registered cows is also sent to the Canadian Dairy Network (CDN). CDN is responsible for the maintenance of a national dairy database, the provision of genetic evaluations for all dairy cattle breeds and for the establishment of national standards associated with genetic evaluations, supervised herd recording and publishable lactations. Production information for verified cows being tested through a DHI program is sent to CDN where it is examined for inclusion in genetic evaluations. CDN's principles for publishable records and genetic evaluation are applied and qualifying production information is sent to the breed associations and to A.I. organizations.

That distribution of your information is the behind the scenes participation in Canada's dairy genetics activity. More visible, and perhaps more important to you, is the day to day distribution of your production data that you can control.

As a dairy producer you also have control over releasing information personally. Every dairy customer enrolled with CanWest DHI has a unique combination of Herd Number, Contact Number and PIN Number that allows personal direction of how, when and to whom your production data is released.

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DAIRY COMP SUPPORT

Herd health visits made easy

Many dairy producers use a regularly scheduled visit by their veterinarian to monitor their herd's health and reproductive status. Dairy Comp can save the dairyman time in preparing for the vet visit and recording the information that results from that visit. Plus, with all the herd event information entered in Dairy Comp, the vet list that is generated will include all cows that need the vet's attention.



With Dairy Comp SCOUT or Dairy Comp 305, vet lists can be generated at the touch of a button.

Dairy Comp SCOUT gives the dairyman an easy and simple way to create their vet list. First, there are up to 6 parameters that can filter which cows need to be on the vet list. These parameters are set by the producer and can be easily altered to reflect changes in management. The vet list can include cows for pregnancy diagnosis, fresh cow checkups, cows showing no heats, or problem breeder cows as defined by the dairyman. The vet list report is then selected off the menu, and can be sorted as desired. A vet list for heifers in the herd is generated in the same way.

Entering the vet visit results into the program is simple and quick. The dairyman can enter the vet visit result as well as a vet remark for each cow. The vet remarks can be pre-defined by the dairyman to make data entry much less cumbersome. The result and remark will automatically appear in a cow's record and can even be added to subsequent vet lists so the information is readily available for review at a future vet visit.

Dairy Comp SCOUT makes a herd health visit easy to prepare for and ensures that cows needing attention do not get missed.

