



INFORMATION TO IMPROVE THE BOTTOM LINE!

A new focus set for Management Clubs

The management clubs that were part of the previous ROF program will take on a new look and will resemble more of a "short course" format than before. Each club can choose from a list of professional presentations on various herd management topics that will be presented by DHI herd Management Specialists or can choose to use an outside speaker.

Existing management clubs can continue as before but the fees will be split into 2 parts. Members of a club do not have to participate in ROF analysis.

Highlights of the changes

- No one needs to be involved with ROF to be part of the management club
- No "formalized club structure" is needed. All that is needed is a minimum of 10 people willing to meet 4 times and to provide a meeting place
- DHI Herd Management Specialists will look after all other details
- Club chooses 4 of 13 topics available from DHI
- Meetings will be 1 hour of presentation followed by 1 hour of discussion of applying the information to the home operation
- Reduced cost if you are registered in both ROF and Herd Management Club

Topics are as follows

- Raising Healthy Calves
- Managing Replacements to Maximize Productivity
- Fundamentals of Nutrition
- Advanced Nutrition from feed to milk
- Feeding Management Principles
- Understanding Reproduction
- Managing the Estrus Cycle
- Using Vaccinations to Maintain Herd Health
- Principles of Providing Cow Comfort
- Understanding DHI records

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ROF - a tool for all dairymen!

The ROF program is now available to all dairymen. The tool to measure the economic effect of changes in feed quality, cost, ration adjustments, changes in climate, cow comfort or other management is available via the internet, agribusiness or through a Canwest DHI Herd Management Specialist.

ROF started 6 years ago and was combined with management clubs so the participants could have a forum to discuss the results. Thanks to their participation and input, the program has evolved such that now dairymen can login to the program directly, enter the information and print the herd results. In addition, the Canwest DHI website (www.canwestdhi.com), has numerous factsheets to explain how to use the program as well as how to interpret the results.

Highlights of the new program

- Available to all registered members by mail, fax or internet
- Available through trained herd advisors (see list of participating companies), DHI Herd Management Specialists or by the dairyman himself
- Provides Milking-Cow ROF and Heifer and Dry Cow costs
- Pricing based on option chosen and includes unlimited use for 1 year
- Comparisons are based on other herds in your region
- Benchmark comparisons provided

Overview of the program

ROF compares the revenue from milk in the tank on a given day to the cost of ALL feeds fed to the milking herd. The results show:

- Feed cost/cow/day
- Revenue cow/day
- Return (ROF)/cow/day
- Forage and grain intake
- Feed cost/liter and/TDMI
- Average milk, fat and protein production/cow
- Change in return from last test

ROF uses "standard feed prices" and "milk price" (/kg component) to eliminate the effect

of fluctuations in these 2 factors. The purpose of the program is to identify items within the control of the dairyman that affect profit. Change in milk price and feed already harvested and stored are outside the control of the dairyman on a month to month basis.

The member receives 3 basic reports: A Test Day Analysis, a Herd History and a comparison to other herds in the same region for any given month. Samples of those can be seen on the DHI website. In addition provincial comparisons and benchmark reports (that show the results broken down by various management styles) are available periodically.

Participating Companies

At the date of this printing, the following companies have, (or will have shortly), trained people to enter data, print and interpret reports: Agribrands Purina, Agtek Nutrition, Land O Lakes Feed, Ritchie Feed and Seed, W&S Feed Supplies

Cost of the program

The price depends on the type of service you choose. If you choose to have the DHI staff to enter your information and mail reports, the price is \$75.00 (plus GST)/year. This includes monthly mailing of input forms, results and comparisons. If you choose to enter it directly via the internet and print your own reports the price is \$60.00 (plus GST)/year. Regional comparisons will be mailed on a monthly basis.

Those choosing to have their advisor enter the data and send them the results will have to talk directly to the company involved.

How to access the program

- Log-on to www.canwestdhi.com
- Click on Return Over Feed on left sidebar
- For factsheets and sample reports, click on ROF factsheets, sample reports and newsletters
- To access ROF program, click on ROF program

Participation in University study available to ROF or Management Club members

Study Topic: Calving Ease and Calf Survival on Ontario Dairy Farms



The outcome of every pregnancy should be a live calf and a healthy productive cow or heifer. Unfortunately, an increasing number of cow/heifer pregnancies end in difficult calvings, producing dead calves and slow starting dams. There is no doubt that many factors contribute to the success of calving, including herd nutrition and management practices, as well as cow and calf characteristics such as size and condition.

The University of Guelph is launching a new study aimed at identifying which are the most important among these herd and cow level factors. The ultimate goal is to provide producers with management advice that will ultimately lead to a decrease in calf loss and an increase in cow productivity. Participants in Management Clubs and ROF will be invited to participate in this study.

Those who choose to do so will be provided with cow and calf measuring devices, and asked to record details about all calvings occurring on their farm during the study period. In return, they will receive periodic progress reports, and ultimately insight into the management and animal characteristics that impact the survival and health of their calving cows and newborn calves.

If you are interested in taking part in this study, contact your Management Club or ROF facilitator or call Bill Grexton at 1-800-549-4373 for an information package (which includes an enrollment form).

Management Clubs *(Continued)*

- Evaluating a herd using DHI Reports
- Advantages of Using Herd Management Software
- Return over Feed Costs

Cost of the program

The cost is \$140.00 (plus GST)/person/year and includes 4 meetings with your group. If you wish to participate in the ROF program as well, you will receive a \$15.00 credit towards the cost of the ROF program.

ROF RELATIONSHIPS

Collecting the herd management information for each herd allows us to look at herd profitability from different angles based on some herd management parameters. In this newsletter, we will look at some of the "lesser" published relationships and make comments. I hope you will take some time to consider the implications of what is shown.

Only 110 herds submitted cost information to raise heifers to calving. However when the costs were grouped and compared some interesting things appeared. Information from more herds is needed!

Heifer-raising cost results

Grouped by Feed Cost to Calving

Category	# Tests	Avg Cost	Cost/Day	Age @ Calving	Herd Avg ROF	Herd Avg 1st Lact 305M
< 700	19	\$565.00	\$0.74	24.9	\$12.93	8,692
\$700-\$850	31	\$777.00	\$1.00	25.4	\$12.49	8,356
\$850-\$1000	25	\$911.00	\$1.18	25.3	\$12.47	8,531
\$1000-\$1150	9	\$1,061.00	\$1.39	25.0	\$14.01	8,770
> \$1150	20	\$1,303.00	\$1.68	25.5	\$13.08	8,483

1. There was no apparent relationship between cost to raise heifers and age at 1st calving, herd ROF or first lactation production.
2. There are significant cost differences in feeding a heifer to calving. For an average herd of 70 cows, that amounts to over \$30,000 per year.

ROF results comparing supplement and complete feed in 2003

SUPPLEMENT

Category	# Tests	ROF	Cost	Cost/L	Milk/Cow	Fat/Cow
< 50 cows	816	\$12.61	\$4.08	\$0.140	29.1	1.15
51-100 cows	515	\$13.04	\$4.03	\$0.135	29.9	1.18
> 100 Cows	136	\$13.25	\$3.94	\$0.131	30.2	1.17

COMPLETE FEED

Category	# Tests	ROF	Cost	Cost/L	Milk/Cow	Fat/Cow
< 50 cows	118	\$11.00	\$4.05	\$0.156	26.0	1.05
51-100 cows	59	\$11.56	\$4.14	\$0.150	27.7	1.06
> 100 Cows	N/A	-	-	-	-	-

Other (not complete or supplement - probably commodities)

CATEGORY	# Tests	ROF	Cost	Cost/L	Milk/Cow	Fat/Cow
< 50 cows	124	\$12.55	\$3.79	\$0.134	28.3	1.11
51-100 cows	106	\$13.36	\$3.83	\$0.128	29.9	1.17
> 100 Cows	80	\$13.45	\$3.72	\$0.124	30.0	1.16

A look at the major protein source showed that most herds fed a supplement.

The cost/cow was not significantly different when comparing supplement with complete feeds but was about \$0.20/cow per day higher than "Other" (It should be remembered that mixing cost is included in the first 2 prices but not necessarily in the "Other" category.) Larger herds had higher ROF with not much difference in cost.

Over a 2-year period, TMR fed herds (which were the majority) produced more milk, fat and profit than component fed herds. Interesting is that while the feed costs were higher in TMR fed herds, the cost/L was identical in both years.

ROF Results based on Feeding System in 2003

Category	# Tests	ROF	Cost	Cost/L	Milk/Cow	Fat/Cow
TMR	1,123	\$12.92	\$3.97	\$0.135	29.5	1.16
NO TMR	164	\$12.16	\$3.78	\$0.135	28.0	1.10

ROF Results based on Feeding System in 2002

Category	# Tests	ROF	Cost	Cost/L	Milk/Cow	Fat/Cow
TMR	2,002	\$12.89	\$3.87	\$0.131	29.5	1.14
NO TMR	302	\$12.65	\$3.77	\$0.131	28.8	1.13

The tables above are only excerpts from the complete comparison. For more detail contact your ROF facilitator.