

# Dairy Comp TIPS & TRICKS



Handy Advice for Dairy Advisors using Dairy Comp 305

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ISSUE 2

## Send us your ideas and questions about Dairy Comp

The intent of this newsletter is to help you understand the program as it applies to your usage. As I mentioned in the first issue, it will contain helpful hints for improving reports or analysis features of your program, as well as some current herd management information. **Please provide comments or helpful hints of your own that we can reproduce in future newsletters. Send it to Bill Grexton at [bgrexton@canwestdhi.com](mailto:bgrexton@canwestdhi.com)**

### Use of Dairy Comp Made Easy

Jeromy TenHag, Dairy Comp Software Support

There are large volumes of herd information that are stored in your Dairy Comp 305 program. Especially for new users, it may be difficult to organize an effective group of reports that you can use to monitor the performance of the herds you serve.

Before entering your Dairy Comp program, consider what information you feel would be necessary to give you a good picture of herd performance that you need to monitor.

I would recommend looking at the same 4 or 5 reports for each herd on your herd list. These 4 or 5 reports that you would like to see may be in the default set of reports in your Dairy Comp program. I would include information that shows production, reproduction and health in these reports.

A key feature of Dairy Comp is that you can create reports that meet your needs if they do not already exist. New reports are created by typing **ALTER** at command line, choosing **3.Commands**, and then choosing **4.Add a Command**. Type in the report information and save it as a command. When all the desired reports have been created, you can use **ALTER** to create 1 more command that will link all the reports together (by typing the report name separated by !). This way all desired reports can be accessed with one menu command.



If you create custom reports in your basis file, you can use the **CLONE** command to place the command in each herd on your access list (use with caution), as well as it being in every new herd you add.

To place the linked set of reports on your menu so you get all reports needed to monitor your herds in one spot, type **SETUP** at the command line, choose the **MENU** tab and double-click on an **<OPEN>** slot. Enter the linked report command name.

Using this setup will save you time in accessing your reports for each herd. An added bonus is that it is quite easy for anyone to enter Dairy Comp and print out the reports that are needed.

### Updates are Coming

Dairy Comp 305 updates should be in your hands when you receive this newsletter. The update will introduce some new items and repair old problems. Read the documentation with the CD for details. Please be sure to update your program. This will prevent problems from occurring in the future.

### Monitoring Efficiency using 305

Ewen Ferguson, DVM, Campbellford

Evaluating a farm is not always because a problem exists - sometimes it is to validate good performance. Records will allow you to ask questions not give answers. So when looking at your herd, choose the areas you are concerned with and then look at reports that will show the herd performance in those areas. However, be careful of snapshots. They may not always show the entire story. Looking for patterns and history may be beneficial.

#### What to Troubleshoot

First, what are the areas in your herd that need monitoring? In most herds the main categories are production/components, health/culling, udder health and reproduction. Second, what is an acceptable level of performance? You need to decide this. You may benchmark past performance or compare to others. Then look for exceptions to the rule - not at every animal. Finally, develop a plan of action for animals that fail to meet standards. You need to choose things you can compare monthly. (You also need to evaluate if the plan of action is working). The whole process needs to be easy or it will fail.

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#### Upcoming Dates

Dairy Comp 305 Producer Update Meetings .....March 21-28

Dairy Comp 305 Advisor Update Meetings .....Late April 2006

Notices will be mailed to each user in early March

I recommend when looking at production to look at performance over time as well as current test day. Look for herd variations or lactation group variations as well as Individual variations. For components look for high/low BF or ratio or SNF ratio. What stage of lactation do they occur?

**Monthly overview - things I look at:**

**Monitor Report:** Shows 40 performance benchmarks for the past 12 tests. Look at changes within the herd. Once found, look for individuals who created the change (clicking on the benchmark name will provide the list).

**Test Day Summaries:** These reports show production summaries by lactation group as well as stage of lactation. You can compare the performance of each group.

**Herd Reproduction Reports (bredsum):** These will show reproduction performance in different ways. Choose the one that shows what you want to see. Pregnancy Rate (PR) is an excellent method to measure reproductive efficiency.

**Test Day SCC (high SCC):** Which cows have a high SCC? Can you identify the stage they are in? Is it a few animals or is it a whole herd issue?

**Graphs:** Sometimes it is easier to see trends on a graph than in columns of numbers. This may be particularly true of DIM at first breeding (see last newsletter), or production or components. Here are a couple of examples:

**Graph PCTF by DIMTD LCTGP (Figure 1) -** compares % fat by DIM. Is the fat either high or low compared to normal in the 1st 60 days? What about the first week? Does the % fat indicate that cows are mobilizing body fat too quickly?

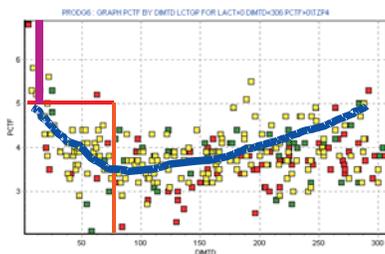


Figure 1

**Graph LS by PLS LCTGP (Figure 2) -** to compare past and current Linear Score. How many new infections are there (upper left), or chronic infections (upper right). These are the animals needing attention.

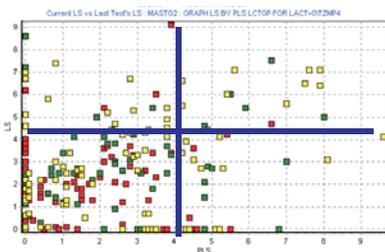


Figure 2

Additional information that can provide clues to changes would be to look at:

**Why and when cows are culled** - this may give direction as to what part of the lactation to focus on as well as the reasons cows are

leaving. Dairy Comp 305 has a command called EGRAPH which can show this information.

At the command line type EGRAPH. Choose the events that you wish to see (Figure 3). In this case, Died and Sold are ticked. Choose your date range and how you want it graphed and click OK.

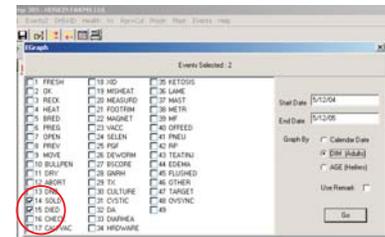


Figure 3

The following graph (Figure 4), will appear showing the count of animals (in this case by DIM). Note that in this case most of the deaths (blue) occurred under 100 DIM and solds (red) after 300 DIM

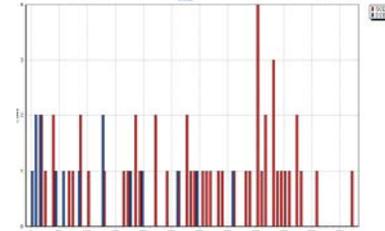


Figure 4

**Beware of Information Overload**

Many times there is too much information. It is important to gather just what you need and it is as important to use it, once you have gone to the effort to

**Advanced Reports that May Help**

Bill Grexton, Herd Management Services

**PLOT LS=4 FOR MILK>0 BY LS\YTRZ** shows the range of incidence of mastitis infection as well as the cure rate by test. Shown in Figure 5 is the number as well as percent in each group.

```

Command : PLOT LS=4 FOR: BY LS\YTRZ
LS          TEST D A T E S
Clean %     313 416 522 7 3 820 10 7 1113 1 7 323
           66 65 64 61 53 50 55 59 49
Cured %     129 128 125 123 105 98 114 111 94
           5 7 4 3 6 6 7 6 7
New Inf %   9 13 7 6 12 11 14 11 13
           0 6 7 7 9 10 10 8 12
Chronic %   16 12 13 15 18 19 20 15 24
           11 13 15 16 19 15 13 10
loFresh %   21 26 29 33 37 29 32 25 19
           7 7 9 8 11 16 10 11 18
HiFresh %   14 13 10 17 21 32 20 20 35
           3 3 2 4 3 3 3 4 4
Average %   5 6 4 8 5 6 7 7 8
           2.7 2.7 2.9 3.0 3.2 3.1 3.0 2.9 3.0
           194 198 196 202 198 195 207 189 193
    
```

Figure 5

A unique method to look at the current SCC situation is to use the command **SUM LS=4 PLS=4 FOR LACT>0 BY LCTGP**.

Figure 6 shows results in terms of number and % in each category (shown here for Lact 1 - goals added in red for reference).

```

Command : SUM LS=4 PLS=4 FOR LACT>0 BY LCTGP

LCTGP=1      PLS
New <10%    4.0      Chronic <10%
           5 | 2 7
           6% | 3% 9%

LS:4.0 -----
           67 | 6 73      Cured >70%
           84% | 8% 92%
           =====
           72 8 80
           90% 11% 100%
    
```

Figure 6

Both of these methods show percent of herd or group to look at instead of individuals. It will help you decide Is it a cow problem or a herd problem?