Dairy Comp TIPS & TRICKS

Handy Advice for Producers using Dairy Comp SCOUT and 305

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**

Using Technician Tables to Track Services per Conception (SPC)

Ron Hurtubise, Dairy Comp Software Support

Have you ever wondered how to track the SPC by the AI technician? Here is how to set up your program to allow this:

- In **SCOUT,** go into **Program Setup,** in the **File Menu,** and select **Techs & Bredcodes.**
- In **Dairy Comp 305,** go to **Alter Option,** under the **File Column,** and select **Breeding and Technicians.**
- On the left side of the table, double-click on the top available slot,
- Enter a code number to track the technician. You will then be prompted to enter the name of the technician.
- Select **OK** to save the change, and double-click on the next available slot, and follow the same steps for the next technician.

Now that this table is established, during the process of entering a bred event you will now be prompted to select a technician number from the table.

You can now analyze the Services per Conception by going to the **RPR+CUL** Column, and selecting **Repro Analysis Cow**s from the menu. Then select **Technicians** from the sub menu.

Once selected, you will be prompted for a start date to analyze breeding dates by technicians (default is 13 months prior to TODAY). Enter the date you would like to start, and then the end date (which defaults to today's date). Press **enter.**

A table will appear which shows how many services were performed by each technician, and out of those services, how many animals were declared open, how many were declared pregnant, how many are OTHER (which includes cows that were sold or died before being verified open, or pregnant) and cows that are too early to know pregnancy status.

The left side of the table shows % conceived sorted for each technician.

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.

The SCOUT basis file is being revised and because it is not completed yet, the update come later in the year. However, make sure you enter the codes sent to you so your program does not expire.

Hints to make E-Reg Trouble-Free

Trevor Fischer, Dairy Comp Software Support

- Make sure data is complete for each animal to be registered (and dam), prior to entering the e-registration module. Adding long registration name is done by clicking underneath the **BNAME** or **CHAIN** in the cowcard header. Updating any item field like **CREG** can be done by double clicking on the item box in the cowcard.

- Make sure sire information is entered correctly. You can change incorrect information in **SCOUT** by choosing **File, Program Setup,** choosing **SIRES** option (In **Dairy Comp,** type **ALTER** at the command line, choose **8.Sire List**)**,** and then **4.Change Sire Name.** You can change the sire name, sire registration number or NAAB code in the edit box.

- Send ONE electronic registration file per day. This will avoid any file overwriting, since each file sent from your program is named the same.

Upcoming Dates

Notices will be mailed to each user in early March

Monitoring Dairy Efficiency Using Dairy Comp 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 your 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.

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 (Dairy Comp 305 only): 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

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 collect it. So plan what you will use before you start looking.

A Quick Way to See 305 Calving Information

Bob Reck, Dairy Comp Software Support

An effective method to create a report showing the number of calvings you have had in the last 365 days and ratio of males to females is by using the Events command in Dairy Comp 305. This also helps in creating other reports such as your projected inventory by showing the ratio of live female calves.

Type **EVENTS\3** at the command line. It will create a calf report for the past year (see figure 3).
This report shows:
- Total calvings for the year
- Animals with no information on their calving event
  Number and percentage of:
  - twins, males, females,
  - calves born alive and dead (stillbirth rate)

Figure 3

By clicking on the corresponding month (in blue), a list of those animals calving in that month is shown.

The list would show the number of the dam, the date she calved, the result of calving (M-male, F-female, S- SOLD did not add to cowfile, K-KEPT added to cowfile, A-alive, D-dead), and the calving ease.

If you type **EVENTS\3 by LCTGP,** you can evaluate by lactation group to see if there are differences in stillbirth for Lactation 1 compared to the others. If so, do you need to select bulls noted for easier calving?