



DHI and On-Farm Technology

Robotic milking is growing rapidly in Canada and will be a significant segment of our future industry. For DHI, the evolution of technology is providing

both challenges and opportunities.

Robotic systems are similar in many ways to what electronic milking parlour meters and sensors have been providing for some time now – a large amount of on-farm data. For DHI, the challenge is to ensure we can both add to, and complement, that data so dairy herd managers have the best possible information available for making decisions.

As our industry evolves, emphasis on milk quality, components production, animal health and efficiency of production will continue to increase. Today and tomorrow's manager will be looking for all available tools to help improve profitability. It is not a matter of one technology to the exclusion of the other, but rather using all available tools in a complementary way to achieve the best possible results.

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The evolution of technology has also been an opportunity for DHI. The list of lab analysis and diagnostic tests that can be done from the routine milk sample has grown significantly from fat and protein to include a long list of value added analysis, disease and pregnancy testing – and the list will only continue to grow as technology progresses.

Today in Canada we have over 450 robotic herds on DHI, representing about 5% of our customers. In some European countries robotic milking has grown to 20-25% of all DHI herds and it is encouraging to see that DHI continues to play an important role in the support of dairy herd management and that participation in industry programs has remained strong.

Regardless of the amount of technology used on your farm, I encourage you to take a critical look at the information you have and consider how DHI services make it even better. Used in a complementary way, on-farm technology and DHI services make a powerful herd management information package.

Wishing you and your families all the best for the holiday season.

Ed Friesen, Chairman, CanWest DHI

Ed Friesen is a dairy producer from Kleefeld, Manitoba