



ONE THOUSAND USERS!

Dairy Comp software reaches major milestone in Canada



Ad and Anja Bertens of Bertens Holsteins Ltd. in Olds, Alberta

When Ad and Anja Bertens of Bertens Holsteins Ltd. in Olds, Alberta installed Dairy Comp 305 in January 2008, they didn't realize they were the 1,000th user. "We knew that Dairy Comp was quite popular with other herds as well as with our advisors, but didn't quite realize how many users there are out there" states Ad.

CanWest DHI knew that the 1,000th Canadian Dairy Comp user was fast approaching, but didn't quite realize they had achieved the milestone. That number is made of approximately 240 Advisors and 760 farms. According to Jeromy Ten Hag, Dairy Software Manager for DHI, "The demand for Dairy Comp and the number of new installs has been incredible lately. We figured it might slow down after a couple of really good years in 2005 and 2006, but quite the opposite, we're busier then ever with inquiries and new customers", adding that "we were a bit surprised that the 1,000th milestone came this soon".

Neil Petreny, General Manager for DHI is proud of the accomplishment. "Considering the relatively small dairy industry in Canada and the CanWest region, 1,000 users is a very significant milestone". Petreny adds, "25% of DHI cows, which is about 100,000 cows, are managed day to day by on farm

Both Ad and Anja are very involved in the day to day operation of the farm, which along with a young family makes for busy days. The 270 Holstein cows are milked twice a day in a 26 stall rotary parlour. The electronic parlour and sort gate are interfaced with Dairy Comp, which allows easy management of the herd. "We really like the fact that Dairy Comp is interfaced with our parlour and sort gate" states Ad. He adds, "We can do our parlour management as well as our reproduction and general herd management right out of Dairy Comp. Also, being able to easily share our herd information with our veterinarian and AI company is a great feature. When our advisors come to the farm, they are prepared or can do herd analysis for us right from their office, it's a great plus".

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The Bertens also intend on using the registration module in Dairy Comp to register their calves electronically with Holstein Canada, as well as take advantage of the CQM Module to keep the records necessary for the Canadian Quality Milk program. Anja states, "We have to keep a lot of records. If we can do it electronically with Dairy Comp, it makes it a lot easier."

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1,000 Users (Continued)

Dairy Comp, and that number is growing rapidly. Furthermore, Dairy Comp has been particularly popular with larger herds, which is promising for future growth as herd size continue to increase". Petreny attributes the success of Dairy Comp to the strong product features, which are backed by unparalleled support. He adds, "This is an excellent example of taking advantage of a great product and the company behind it (Valley Agricultural Software of Tulare, CA) and making it better by adapting it to the Canadian situation. We now have the critical mass in terms of number of users to generate enough revenues to reinvest in the product. It would be very expensive for us to develop our own product, and very difficult and costly to do the development necessary to keep up with customer needs and the rapidly changing industry". Petreny concludes, "We're very pleased with how Dairy Comp has contributed to the DHI business as well as to our customers' business".

According to Ten Hag, one of the big reasons for Dairy Comp's success has to do with the sales and service approach that DHI has decided to take with the software. He explains, "We offer a trial period and we go to the farm in person to do the installation and initial training. Instead of mailing out an install kit, or installing via a web download, we feel the face to face interaction to get the product installed and the users trained and up to speed works well. We want to make sure the product will work for the dairyman and we're committed to that. For sure, the on site installation and initial training session has been a key feature—we wouldn't do it any other way".

For herds on DHI, at no additional cost, the software comes loaded with all the information already present in the DHI database. It's a great time saver and customers can hit the ground running right from day one without having to spend hours and hours entering herd information. Another feature for DHI herds is that herd data gets 'backed up' offsite to DHI automatically after each test date. It has come in handy on a few occasions where customers had a computer crash or had the computer stolen right out of the barn office, without a backup available at the farm.

Also of note, herds don't have to be on DHI to be a Dairy Comp user. Currently about 75 Dairy Comp herds are not on DHI. "You don't have to be on DHI to take advantage of the herd management benefits that Dairy Comp provides" states Ten Hag.

The ability to work with a single product for parlour management as well as easy data sharing with advisors and DHI has been a tremendous benefit to customers. In addition, strong Product Development has kept the

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software on the leading edge of customer needs. Examples of such development include the option to transfer Dairy Comp information to and from a handheld device, RFID reading capabilities as well as Canadian specific features such as electronic registration of animals (ERA) to breed associations and a module to organize and track all information requirements for the Canadian Quality Milk (CQM) program.

However the one item that most customers really appreciate is the support that is provided with the product. For most dairy producers, computers and software is not their expertise or strength. DHI provides some of the tech support that is needed to make it all work and take away some of the headaches that sometimes come with technology. The Dairy Comp support staff understand that software is just a tool and means to an end, which is improved management and profitability or time savings. Ad and Anja Bertens both agree, "Support so far has been tremendous. Dairy Comp is very user friendly, but also lots of time was put up front by the support staff to get Dairy Comp customized to our specific farm needs. We're not computer experts and we're usually short of time, so it's been nice to have someone dependable to make it all work; someone that understands computers, but also herd management".

When Ten Hag looks at the future, he believes it will not take that long to see the next 1,000 users. He comments that "Even with overall declining herd numbers, as average herd size continue to grow, more and more farms will turn to computerized records for improved management and time savings; to a large extent, we're competing against pen and paper. Software will not be for every farm, but I think that over time the majority will see the benefits of using computerized records, and we'll be there to meet that need."

For the Bertens, being the 1,000th Canadian user has been a good experience. Ad concludes, "For us converting to Dairy Comp from our previous software was a matter of getting the right Herd Management Software to meet our needs. It's nice to know there are a large number of users out there, which probably means the product will be around for a long time and will continually be kept up to date for the future. And that's good for our farm and our industry."

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Tools to Improve Profitability

Every year the board at CanWest DHI devotes time to planning and, together with staff we set goals to reach in the short and long term. One of the goals established in 2004 was to have by 2010, 25% of all cows in the CanWest region managed day to day by Dairy Comp software installed on the on farm computer. This goal has been reached two years early. While dedicated staff played a large part in this achievement, the attributes of the product are also responsible for its success.

Dairy Comp helps the entire dairy industry manage cows and information. On farm, Dairy Comp gathers all individual cow information, interfaces with parlour systems and assists managers with day to day herd management details such as breeding, vaccinations and quota management. To the vets and nutritionists Dairy Comp information allows for rapid analysis of herd health and feed issues. For the AI, Breeds, Genetic Evaluation and Research groups it provides a wealth of accurate and validated herd data crucial to their operations.



From personal experience, I find winter a good time to start using Dairy Comp. The extra time invested in getting to know the program and all that it offers, pays back many times over during the busy spring, summer and fall. Once set up, a couple of minutes is all that's needed to produce a variety of lists from preg checks to vaccinations.

Winter is also a great time to regroup and plan. Take the lessons learned from past years to ensure success this year. As we warm up the tractor to clear snow once again remember that spring is just around the corner!

Once again, congratulations to our staff and dairy farm managers on the success of Dairy Comp, a product that truly benefits our entire industry!

John Bongers is a Dairy producer from Leeds county in eastern Ontario

"Dairy Comp is the way to go."

"Dairy Comp is an easy-to-use program that interfaces very well with our electronic meters and sort gate. Dairy Comp keeps track of all our herd data and it completes calf registration almost on it's own which saves on paperwork. It's a big time saver and has helped to keep our costs down. Dairy Comp is the way to go."

Willem Bloemen, Bloemen Dairy Farms, Lucan, ON

**Dairy
Comp**[®]

Herd Management Software

CANWEST DHI ELECTS BOARD CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

John Bongers was re-elected Chairman of the Board of Directors and Gordon Ell was re-elected Vice-Chairman at a regularly scheduled Board Meeting of CanWest DHI held January 8th, 2008 in Toronto, following the 27th Annual Dairy Herd Improvement General Meeting.

A dairy producer from Leeds County, in eastern Ontario, John Bongers begins his fifth year on the CanWest DHI Board and served previously on the Ontario DHI Board.

Gordon Ell, a milk producer from Kronau, Saskatchewan begins his fourth year with the CanWest DHI Board and served previously on the Holstein Canada Board.

Joining John Bongers and Gordon Ell on the CanWest Executive Committee are Directors Michael Hall of Mountain, Ontario and Lyle Martin of Brussels, Ontario.

Cindy Whytock was elected as Director by acclamation for Zone 3, which encompasses the Ontario counties of Bruce, Grey, Wellington, Dufferin, Simcoe and Haliburton Counties and Regional Municipalities of York and Durham and District Municipality of Muskoka.

John Mooney was elected as Director by acclamation for Zone 6, which encompasses the Northern Ontario Districts.

Ken Schwaerzle was appointed for a one-year term by the BC Milk Producers Association as Director for British Columbia. Ken is Past President of the BC Holstein Association.

ONTARIO NEWS

CANWEST DHI'S ONTARIO MILK TESTING LAB HAS MOVED!

As of February 15, 2008 the CanWest DHI Ontario milk testing lab has moved from its old location on Stone Road to its new location on Elmira Road North in Guelph. The move itself took a period of three days for the relocation of the equipment and setup to resume regular testing on Tuesday, February 19, 2008. Staff assistance was greatly appreciated in making this move as seamless as possible.

The contact number for the Ontario lab remains the same at (519) 824-8927 and the new address is:

**381 Elmira Road North
Unit 2
Guelph, Ontario
N1K 1H3**



Monitor Your Herd's Health

Maintain a healthy herd and improve profitability. Milk test for Johne's and Leukosis disease available from DHI.

2007 PRODUCTION REPORTS

Work has begun on the Ontario Progress Report and the Western Herd Improvement Report. Annual industry reports from DHI are highly respected and referenced, providing the most complete, up-to-date production and management information for herd comparisons in Canada.

Keep your eyes open for these reports as they will be delivered this spring.

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.

What comes between the plans and the bulk tank?

BILL GREXTON, MANAGER HERD MANAGEMENT SERVICES

So many times plans fail to work and the results are far below production or reproduction expectations. What happened? Was the ration you got from the nutritionist wrong? Was the AI stud or vet partially responsible for the poor results? Probably not.

Many times it is the little things between the plan and the tank that caused things to go awry. Let's look at some of these 'detours' along the way. You probably know about their existence, but did you think of how much these things cost in lost production or reproduction?

Let's start with milk and component production.

The number one nutrient needed is WATER. A summary of research shows that 2.5 to 2.8 litres of water is needed for each kg of milk produced. That is a minimum of 90 litres of water needed for a cow producing 35 kg of milk. Does your facilities allow EVERY cow to get from 75-100 litres every day, or is there not enough space? What about WHEN it is available?

What about dry matter intake (DMI)? A rule of thumb is that 1 kg of DMI results in 2.5 kg. of milk. Some research shows that improved intake before calving results in higher intake after calving. Other research says that 60% of intake is influenced by a cow's size and production. What about the other 40% that is in your control. What roadblocks can you remove that will allow your cows to eat more and produce more? Is there enough bunk space? Are the bunks inviting to the animal or is there physical obstacles that make eating difficult? How much time do they have at the bunk? How far do they have to walk to get feed? How can you improve their ability to eat more?

What ration is being fed? The computer generated a ration carefully balancing the fibre, energy protein and minerals. When the weights of individual feeds added to the mix are not carefully adhered to, the cow's ration is out of balance.

Do you determine dry matter analysis of each of the feeds on a regular basis? A lot of people feel it is not that important. Consider this though – if a ration calls for 6 kg of haylage DM to be added for each cow and the Haylage DM changes from 50% to 40%, that means you need to add 25% more weight of haylage to the mix to maintain the right amount of DM from this forage. If this is not done, the fibre level goes down and could result in acidosis and possible laminitis.

What about stall comfort? Research shows that there is a 20% increase in blood flow to the udder when a cow is

lying down as compared to standing. That translates into more milk. What stops cows from wanting to lie down in the stalls? Evaluate the stalls. Try to find why cows are uncomfortable. Do an "Injury Audit". Look at 20 cows for evidence of injury (including inflammation and hair rubbed off). Where is it happening? Does that give you an idea what needs to be adjusted?

What about foot health? A study in Ontario found that if a cow's gait showed evidence of lameness, over 65% (and up to 96%), had foot lesions. How soon do you deal with cows that indicate problems walking? More interesting in this study was that 44% of animals with no indication of problems by their gait also had lesions. Many of these were as the result of laminitis – probably due in some part to unbalanced feed intake. Make it a rule to check and correct their feet more often.

What about the milking preparation? Animals which have had a milk flow analysis done have shown that if no prep is done, there could be up to one minute between when the claw goes on and milk flow starts. That is time where the teat cup can cause damage. More interestingly is that regardless of whether proper preparation was done or not, the milk flow dropped off after 5 minutes. Leaving the teat cups on beyond that can cause udder damage.

From a reproduction perspective, the pregnancy rates (PR) in Canada range from 10% to 25%. PR is a combination of conception rate and heat detection rate. Some studies have shown that Conception Rate does not vary much away from 35-40%. If that is true, then the heat detection rates on these herds must range from 25% to 65%. Other research has found a \$60 - \$70 cost per cow per point below 12% PR. For a 100 cow herd, that is \$6,500 per point. What can be done that costs less than \$6,500 that could improve finding these cows in heat.

What else did I not mention that you can think of? Add those to this list.

This article posed a number of questions. If you looked at these questions and how they apply to your herd, there are probably a number of inexpensive changes in either facilities or operating procedures that could be made that would make sure that bulk tank results (ie. the milk cheques!), are indeed closer to what the plans projected.

Try it. You WILL see results!

CUSTOMER SERVICE

DHI Privacy Policy Summary

Quicker Data/Better Decisions

Receiving your reports via the DHI website is not a new concept as we have been creating reports in this fashion for the past several years. The new advantage to internet delivery of your herd reports is that if you elect to receive your reports in this manner without having any mailed to you, you will receive a \$2.00 per test credit. There continues to be no charge for this delivery method when used in conjunction with mailed reports, however, you do not receive a credit if any reports are coming to you by regular mail.



An advantage to 'Internet Only' delivery of your herd reports is a \$2.00 per test credit.

Internet delivery of reports can provide you with valuable management information quicker than conventional mail. Timely receipt of this data enables you to make important herd management decisions quickly, always a beneficial opportunity particularly in these times of ever increasing commodity prices. Although DHI prides itself on quick turnaround, a random survey of herds indicated that internet reports were available approximately one day sooner than the mailing dates. Add to this the time it takes for the postal service to get the reports to you and the time savings can be substantial.

If you have a computer, an internet hookup and five minutes to spare, you can access your herd reports quickly and efficiently on the DHI website. Your herd's data is protected on the website by a unique Contact and PIN number. You'll not only save \$2.00 per test if you sign up for 'Internet Only' delivery, but may be able to save substantially more off of other herd related costs because you were able to see your herd data before making a potentially costly decision.

Speak to your DHI representative or call the Customer Service Desk at 1-800-549-4373 for more information.

The information collected by CanWest DHI, voluntarily provided by producers through testing services, is available to customers in paper and electronic forms. Access to information by advisors and/or any other parties via mail, email, website, or otherwise, requires explicit customer consent.

Herds enrolled on DHI services may have information published for awards and recognition purposes with Annual Summaries and year-end publications. Additionally, selected information from all customers will be provided to Canadian Dairy Network for the calculation of genetic indexes and sire proofs. Where applicable, information is provided to various breed associations for recognition and breed improvement programs. Participation in DHI testing programs implies consent for the release of data to these third party organizations, unless otherwise stated to DHI.

From time to time, CanWest DHI provides marketing services to third party agricultural organizations. All methods of distribution of marketing materials maintain producer confidentiality. No producer information is sold, traded or otherwise shared.

CanWest DHI operates under Canada's Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA).

Please Note: This is a summary of the DHI Privacy Policy. For the complete statement, please visit www.canwestdhi.com



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