

ReCheck⁶⁰

Pregnancy Milk Test

IT'S ACCURATE!

The test kit has been validated by the manufacturer at 35 days+ post breeding, with high sensitivity and specificity. In a Canadian study, targeting cows 60 days+ post breeding, the milk test kit using routine DHI samples performed very well with similar results.

IT'S EASY & COST-EFFECTIVE!

ReCheck 60 is based on simple, cost-effective ELISA technology. Sample collection is already done as part of regular DHI service, so there is no need to handle cows.

The test is best suited for 60+ days in gestation, making it an ideal test for rechecks, as a supplement to early diagnosis by the herd veterinarian, and for dry off checks.

IT PAYS!

As a Recheck:

- Reduce days Open and save dollars per day
- Rebreed cows before they are too late in lactation, which means fewer culls and lower replacement costs

As a Dry Off check:

- Save dry cow treatment costs
- Save feed costs during dry period
- Milk the cow for a period of time and generate significant milk revenue, or sell her without delay
- Have the peace of mind that cows have been reconfirmed pregnant prior to moving to the dry area

IT'S FLEXIBLE!

Producers have the ability to either:

- Test selected cows
or
- Enroll on an automatic Recheck and/or Dry-Off option, whereby on each test day, cows that meet a herd specific criteria for days since last breeding will be pregnancy tested.

Pregnancy Test Highly Popular

The DHI milk pregnancy test has proven to be very popular since its introduction in January 2013. "Hundreds of producers have used the service and sample volumes have been strong", states Richard Cantin, Manager of Customer Service for DHI.

"Customers tell us that the convenience is a key selling point of this new test. Sample collection is already done as part of our regular service which means that there is no need to handle cows."

The majority of cows are confirmed pregnant, but Open results have been found in about 20% of cases.

Most herds are using the milk test either as a recheck at 60 to 90 days post breeding, to supplement the early diagnosis by the herd veterinarian, or as a last check before dry off.

Improving pregnancy rates and reducing days open can have a significant economic impact. As such, confirming pregnancies and identifying cows that are Open should be a high priority for dairy managers. The DHI milk test is another, 'easy to use' option to help producers.

To date, DHI has milk pregnancy tested almost 20,000 samples from various stage of gestation. As you would expect, the majority of cows are confirmed pregnant, but Open results have been found in about 20% of cases.

Cantin concludes, "we're very pleased by how popular the test has been and by the positive feedback we're getting from our customers. We look forward to continued strong growth of this service."

For more information, talk to your local DHI Customer Service Representative, or contact us at 1-800-549-4373.



Use Dairy Comp to analyze your DHI results



While Dairy Comp software is a great tool for daily herd management, another key function is how it can be used to monitor and analyze DHI production and lab results.

In addition to herd events and milk production data, DHI components, somatic cell counts (SCC), and milk urea nitrogen (MUN) results on each test day, can be easily entered into Dairy Comp after each test. Armed with this information, producers or advisors can easily group, graph and create reports that will highlight trends over time, pick up issues quickly, and show progress after management changes are made. Reports can also be easily customized for each farms preference.

Dairy Comp provides the ability to do comprehensive herd and cow analysis and drill down through details to get a better understanding of the situation.

Reviewing data after each test day can be very valuable. For example, Dairy Comp reports and graphs will highlight cows or groups of cows that are under performing from the dairys goals or targets. Scatter graphs can plot milk production, components, SCC and MUN data over stages of lactation and parity to easily assess how subgroups of cows in the herd are performing.

In particular, the fresh cow group can be monitored closely to ensure a successful transition and target peak production. The dairyman can quickly see how many 'low milk' cows are in early lactation, or show how many cows are in early lactation with poor components, ratios, or udder health issues. When issues arise, Dairy Comp provides the ability to do comprehensive herd and cow analysis and drill down through details to get a better understanding of the situation.

Production, components and MUN data can also be easily analyzed by feeding groups which will provide excellent insight in how the different rations are performing.

Dairy Comp allows the dairyman and advisors to quickly and efficiently use DHI information. Analysis time is saved and the focus can be on discussion and improved decisions — and that leads to a better bottom line.



1.800.549.4373 canwestdhi.com

DHI PRIVACY POLICY SUMMARY

The information collected by CanWest DHI, voluntarily provided by producers through data collection and 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).

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

CanWest DHI CATALYST

OCTOBER 2013

More than ever, managing milk components is key

Quota realities and changing SNF policies mean producers must continue to pay close attention to milk components to optimize milk cheques.

For many herds, purchasing quota and adding cows was the strategy to grow cash flow, efficiency and profits. When operating in an environment where additional quota is expensive or hard to come by, and solid non-fat (SNF) policies are tightening up, you now have to look at optimizing your margin and the profit on that fixed quota.

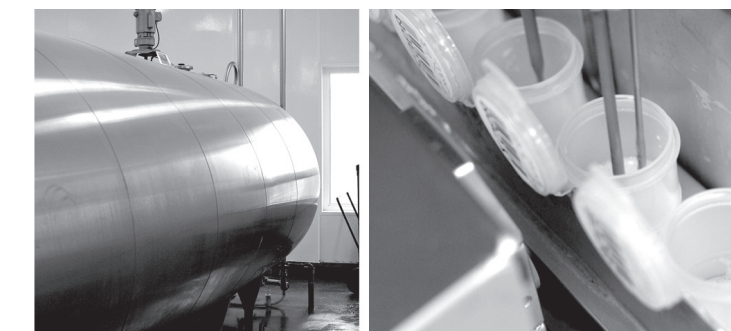
No doubt the focus is on 'efficiency of production', and more than ever, dairy producers have to focus on components production.

For Your Milk Cheque

At a time where buying more quota may not be possible, the only way to maintain or grow margins is to become more efficient at the various aspects of operating the farm.

As it relates to milk production, the efficiency of components production is key. Under multiple components milk pricing, the amount of fat and protein sold and the cost to produce those components is what drives efficiency. For example, filling your quota with fewer cows will result in an efficiency gain as it maintains your revenue while lowering your costs. In some cases, increasing the Protein to Fat ratio (without exceeding the SNF ratio) can have a very positive effect on your milk cheque.

Having a high per cow milk production is usually a good thing from an efficiency point of view, but more importantly is the components that are produced with that. Of course, producers get paid



on what's in the tank, but improvements in the tank are more easily made when individual cow and group information is readily available.

Milk weight alone can't tell how much fat and protein they produce. Component analysis is needed to find out which cows are profitable, and more importantly which ones are not.

Component production can vary significantly from cow to cow, and that means that the revenue they bring will also vary. Components yield is a function of volume and percentage components within that volume. Without knowing the percentage components, you only have half the picture.

Low component cows are inefficient cows and over time they should be replaced. Individual component testing is needed to identify those cows.

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Where is your herd at and do you know which cow is producing component rich milk and more importantly which cows are not? Selling milk at higher components and best possible ratio can really add to your bottom line.

SNF Ratio Cap

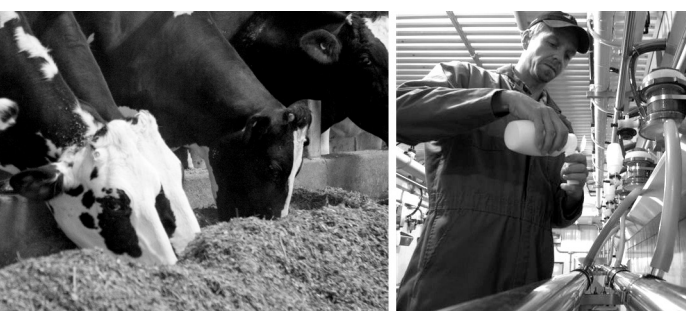
As the Canadian dairy industry continues to address the structural surplus situation, SNF cap policies are being adjusted, harmonized between provinces and are becoming more stringent for producers.

The milk your cows produce contains fat, and SNF (solids non-fat, which are essentially protein, lactose and minerals). The ratio under which these components are produced does vary at the cow level.

The most variable and easily changed is the fat production. So working on higher fat yield will not only improve your efficiency and reduce cost, but will also result in a lower SNF ratio which will help ensure your herd will not be penalized.

Of course the SNF ratio is a bulk tank and overall herd issue, but some individuals or group of cows will have a naturally high or low ratio. Cows with low fat and high SNF ratios should move up the priority list as culling candidates.

Knowing the cows and group information will help manage the overall herd situation.



Optimum Nutrition and Herd Management

The analysis of milk samples from individual cows for butterfat and protein provides herd managers and their advisors with valuable predictive information on the herd's nutrition and health status. The milk components can provide clues that one or more groups of cows within the herd are not performing up to the expected level, given the ration provided, genetic potential and herd management factors.

Even with milk weights, without knowing the components you only have half the picture.



For example, if butterfat percentage in early lactation is high or has trended up, it could be an indication of subclinical ketosis during the important fresh and transition period. It may be indicating a fresh cow or close-up ration or management issue. On the other hand, if butterfat levels are low or inversions are higher for a group or the entire herd, keeping an eye on effective fibre or subclinical acidosis would be warranted.

Knowing and managing for milk components, SCC and ratios is key to efficiency and profitability in today's environment.

Changes in component percentages or ratio, particularly in the transition period, is usually a good indication that something has changed in the diet or that a health problem may be about to occur. Keeping an eye on components during the different stages of lactation is a simple, yet effective way to monitor the herd performance.

The analysis at the cow or group level can easily be done and customized for each farm with Dairy Comp 305 software. It can be done at the farm or with your advisor.

SCC, MUN, Disease and Pregnancy Testing

An added bonus is that DHI has a growing list of additional testing that can be done: SCC, milk urea nitrogen (MUN), mastitis, disease, and now pregnancy testing. Many value-added test options are also available. All of those tests can be done with incredible convenience, using that DHI sample already collected.

Dairy farming is a big business and the old saying that "you can't manage what you don't measure" certainly applies. Knowing and managing for milk components, SCC and ratios is key to efficiency and profitability in today's environment.

Components is the name of the game



In the past, for many farms the way to grow and expand our business was to invest in quota, and grow milk sales. In most provinces today, quota is difficult to come by, if at all available, or is very expensive. This is forcing many of us to reevaluate the best way to grow our business and profits.

For some, investing off-farm or diversifying into other farm income, may be an option. Of course, we can and should look at all aspects of our operations for opportunities to improve and reduce costs. On the milk production and revenue side of things, improvements will have to come from optimizing margins and profit from fixed butterfat sales.

Since the advent of multiple components pricing many years ago, and continuous daily quota more recently in Western Canada, more focus has been given to butterfat production. Makes sense — this is what we get paid on, and that is what limits how much we get paid. The name of the game becomes how efficient can we be at producing that kg of fat and how can we maximize the revenue from it with the most advantageous protein:fat ratio, all within SNF limits?

There lies an opportunity. At the end of the day we should and must continue to strive for growth and improvements on our farms. Components testing and management is not new, but it has a proven track record of paying dividends on our milk cheque. In addition, keeping an eye on components is a simple, yet effective way to monitor the nutrition and herd performance through the different stages of lactation and parity.

I encourage all producers to work closely with their team of advisors and make efficient components production a priority. Use all available tools and expertise. DHI offers many services you can take advantage of. From base components, to MUN testing, to lowering your SCC for higher production, making full use of what is available from DHI can help.

As individual producers we have limited influence on market demands and milk pricing, but we do control how we manage our herds. Driving for optimum and efficient components production (within SNF ratio) will ensure we maximize the return on our milk cheque and maintain or improve profitability. In today's environment, that's an opportunity we should not ignore.

Ed Friesen
Chairman, CanWest DHI

Ed Friesen is a dairy producer from Kleefeld, Manitoba



The large FeedWatch display allows the feeder to accurately prepare the ration, ingredient by ingredient.

Optimize your feeding with TMR Software

FeedWatch can help reduce waste and improve your bottom line. With feed being your biggest cost, measuring and managing the feeding process is critical. That's where a tool like FeedWatch can pay off in a big way.

FeedWatch feed management software is a simple, yet powerful tool to help improve and optimize on farm TMR feeding. The software has been in use in the U.S. and internationally and is being marketed here in Canada by CanWest DHI.

Using FeedWatch involves the installation of the software on a PC, and some hardware on the TMR box. From there, feeding pens, pen counts, ingredients, dry matters, rations can easily be created and continuously updated in the software, which then sends that information wirelessly to a scale indicator and large LED display mounted on the TMR box. The large display allows the feeder to accurately prepare the ration, ingredient by ingredient, and then assists to accurately deliver feed pen by pen as needed. Actual feeding data is then automatically recorded and transmitted back to the office computer for easy record keeping and data analysis.

From easy Dry Matter intake monitoring (with the ability to factor in weigh backs) to complete feed costs calculation and analysis, FeedWatch provides those numbers at the touch of a key. Another important feature is the ability to track ingredient inventories and the monitoring of losses and shrink, which can be significant.

Simply put, better feeding and reduced waste is what FeedWatch is all about, and that means increased profits.

For more information on how FeedWatch can help you manage your feeding for improved profitability, call us today at 1-800-549-4373 or visit canwestdhi.com.

MUN REDUCTION ISN'T JUST ABOUT PROTEIN

MUN reflects what is actually happening in the rumen and is an excellent and inexpensive way to help monitor the balance and efficacy of the feeding program. As fall harvest concludes, rations changes will be made for the new feeding season. Consider using MUN to help ensure your feeding program is working as it should.

Article From Hoards Dairyman, June 2011 by Linda Baker and Robert Munson, Staff Veterinarians, School of Veterinary Medicine, University of Pennsylvania.

Milk urea nitrogen (MUN) concentration is proportional to urinary loss of N (nitrogen) in dairy cattle. While dietary protein seems to have a good handle on MUN levels, it is not the only factor. For over a decade, faculty and staff at the University of Pennsylvania's School of Veterinary Medicine, Centre for Animal Health and Productivity (CAHP) have been involved in ration formulation to reduce MUN and N (and phosphorus as well) excretion while maintaining or enhancing productivity.

MUN targets should be less than 12mg/dl and we often find high producing herds between 8 and 10 mg/dl of MUN. Often, excess soluble protein plays a significant role in raising these numbers. However, increasing available carbohydrate in the rumen can modify the effect of MUN by conversion of excess rumen N into microbial protein.

The accompanying charts are two examples where increases in rumen available carbohydrate, in particular starch availability, reduced the herd bulk tank MUN.

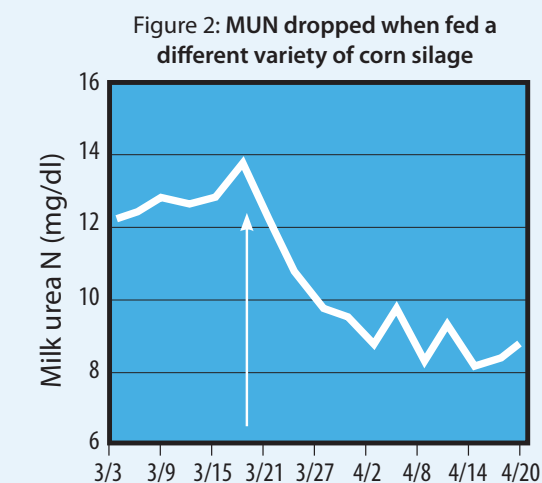
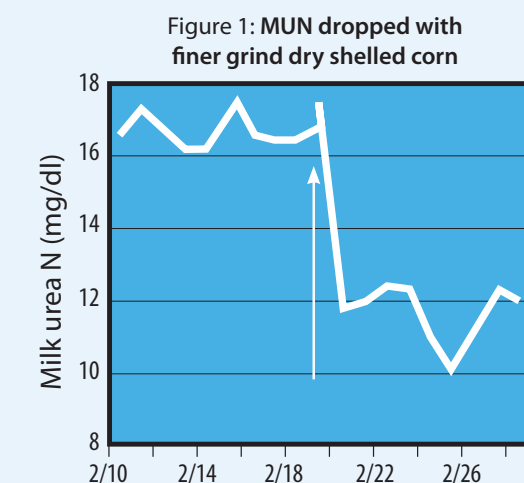
We visited a 350 cow herd in early 2009. The amount of digested corn kernels in the manure caught our attention. We suggested that the producer reduce the grind size of dry shelled corn. The suggestion was implemented on February 18. Two days later, bulk tank MUN dropped from roughly 16mg/dl to 12mg/dl (see Figure 1).

The 4-unit reduction in MUN equals a drop in urine N of 50 grams per cow per day which would add up to a stunning 11,686 pound reduction in urine N per year for the herd. This drop in MUN demonstrates a dramatic improvement in nitrogen utilization on the herd level.

On the production side, there was an accompanying 2.5 pound gain in milk production. Just one week later, an additional 1.5 pounds were gained. If this herd maintained a 2-pound response for the year as a result of this management decision, it could yield more than \$30,000 of additional income.

A change in silage

The second case involves a change of silage on another farm milking 130 cows. This herd took advantage of a new variety of corn silage available in March 2009. The new silage was included in the total mixed ration (TMR) at the same feeding rate as the variety previously



being fed. Following the change, the MUN dropped from around 14mg/dl down to a range of 10 to 11mg/dl (see Figure 2).

The equivalent urine N reduction would be at least 37 grams per cow per day which would amount to 3,307 pounds per year for the herd.

Nutrient analysis of the corn silages revealed neutral detergent fibre (NDF) decreased from 46 percent to 35 percent and starch content rose from 29 percent to 41 percent from the old to the new variety of corn silage. The decline in MUN is a result of dramatic increase in rumen available starch and corresponding improvement in rumen nitrogen utilization.

On the production side, there was an initial increase in milk production of 3 pounds per cow followed by an additional 2 pounds per cow the following week. Milk production responses of this nature have a significant economic advantage to producers as marginal revenues greatly exceed the marginal costs of production. If this herd could maintain a 3 pound response for the year as a result of choosing corn silage varieties with more available starch, greater than \$20,000 of annual milk income would be realized while concurrently reducing N excretion from the cow.