Dairy Comp Tips & Tricks

Handy advice for dairy producers using Dairy Comp Herd Management Software

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Maintaining accurate records in Dairy Comp

Why do we keep records on our dairy? Good records will serve four important goals:

1. **Accurate and timely to-do lists to be carried out on the dairy can be generated.**

2. **Allows for effective monitoring on how well the herd is currently performing.**

3. **Gives a record of lifetime information for each individual animal.**

4. **Provides herd information for use in genetic evaluation and dairy research.**

Dairy Comp has many tools that can help you meet all these goals. Whether it is generating a vet list, looking at the pregnancy risk numbers for the last 6 months or knowing when the milk of a treated cow is able to go back into the bulk tank, you will need to record data generated on the dairy and enter it into Dairy Comp in a timely manner.

Some good practices to follow to make good herd records:

1. Use unique visible ID for animals in the herd not to be re-used when the animal leaves.

2. Entry of data into Dairy Comp on a routine and regular basis. By making entries into Dairy Comp a routine part of your day, the task is small and data is in the computer timely. This will make your to do lists much more accurate.

3. Standardizing the format of data entry made into Dairy Comp. Whether it is setting up standard remarks for vet day data entry, creating protocols to enter treatments or foot trim results, or setting up breeding codes on Bred event entry, there are many setup options that can help make data entry easier for you. When tasks are easier they are much more likely to get completed.

4. Recording information as soon as possible after an event has occurred in a consistent manner by all involved with data recording on the dairy.

5. Record as much data as possible so you can make more accurate lists and enhance the management decisions made on the dairy. Recording health events occurring on your dairy can be setup to be easy and quick. The information recorded will make for effective herd management.

We can all agree that incomplete or inaccurate information leads to poorer herd management decisions to be made at the dairy. Dairy Comp can help greatly in making record keeping easier and quicker and also has many excellent features that can allow you to use the information recorded to manage your herd more effectively.

Please contact Dairy Comp support to ask us how we can help make record keeping easier for you.

For the last couple of years we have had the ability to install Pocket Cowcard read-only version on your Android device. Having Pocket Cowcard on your phone, allows for quick access to animal information wherever you are. The **Events, Items, TestDays, PrevLacts** and **Lactation** tabs in your Dairy Comp cowcard is accessible on your phone. You can add to-do lists into Pocket Cowcard on your phone as well for convenient look up. The Pocket Cowcard read version is available to Dairy Comp 305 and SCOUT users.

Currently we are able to also offer the Pocket Cowcard write version for Android devices to Dairy Comp 305 users. This allows for access to your herd information as described above, plus the ability to enter animal data which can be synchronized to your Dairy Comp 305 program. You can enter events for an individual animal, enter your vet results as the vet check is being done or indicate animals that received attention from a to-do list loaded on the device. The convenience of doing this from anywhere and have the data loaded into Dairy Comp 305 when back at the office can be a huge time saver and helps ensure data is recorded timely and accurately.
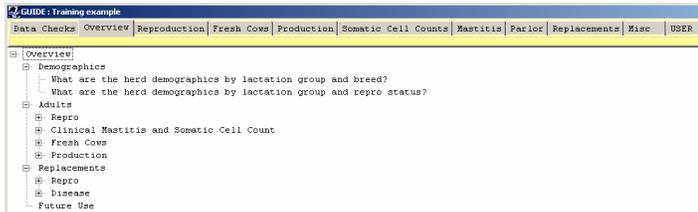
The **Samsung Galaxy III or IV** is the recommended phone device for installation of Pocket Cowcard. Please call the Dairy Comp support team for more information on this new exciting product!

Pocket Cowcard data entry now available on your Android phone!

Check out the Dairy Comp 305 GUIDE command

GUIDE is a powerful tool to help monitor the performance of a dairy herd and provides answers to questions in several herd management areas.

To access this module, type GUIDE on the command line and press enter. The following screen appears.

You will notice a number of tabs along the top of the GUIDE screen which groups questions regarding areas of focus regarding herd management.

Click on the tab for your area of interest and get answers to questions you may have been wondering about. When you click on a question a list or graph will appear that gives an accurate answer. The beauty of this module is it allows you to dig deeper into the data of a herd without needing to create new commands.

The Overview tab is a quick overview of each management area and a great place to start. Each tab across the top is represented in the Overview section and more reports can be found under each individual tab.

Do not underestimate the value of the Data Checks section. By looking at the reports in this area, you will quickly know if you have current and up-to-date information available to do your herd analysis.

GUIDE has a User tab which can be setup to contain customized monitoring reports in any management area for your dairy.

Using EID Manager to enter registration numbers

The EID Manager allows you to load your animal registration numbers quickly without having to key in individual numbers while reducing the risk of data entry error. To add registration tags:

• You can access **EID Manager** by going to the "**File**" drop-down menu then select "**Alter**" and then choose "**EID Manager**".

• To add a batch of tags select "**Enter EID Batch**". You will be prompted for the starting EID number of the batch of tags that you have at hand. Enter the starting EID number (e.g.124000011691900) and then enter the number of tags that you have. The actual registration number is 15 characters long beginning with the country code (Canada=124). You can find this number on the RFID button.

• Click on the "**Add**" button and the EID Manager will add the number of tags that you entered. If tags need to be deleted, highlight the registration number in the left side of the window and select "**Delete**" which is found below the list of numbers. There is also the "**Cleanup EID File**" button found just below the enter EID Batch selecting this option will remove registration numbers that are present in the cowfile.

Once the tags have been added the registration number pick list will be activated. When you add a new animal to the cowfile or add a registration number to an existing animal the pick list will pop up. Select the correct number and then hit enter. The number is removed from the list once you have selected it. By using the EID manager, we greatly decrease the risk of keyboard typing errors, plus we reduce the liklihood of assigning registration numbers that is already in use.

Managing sire information in Dairy Comp

Sires that are referenced somewhere in your Dairy Comp 305 and Scout cowfile are on your sire list. If you open up **ALTER** options and choose **option 8. Sire**s, you will see the list of those sires. Sires are added to your sire list each time you use a new service sire or after entering a new sire on a purchased animal entry into the cowfile. Paying attention to maintaining good sire data will benefit your management decisions, help ensure accurate sire information is submitted when registering animals with the herd book, and provide more reliable data to the genetic evaluation process.

To maintain the most accurate sire information, we would recommend adding sires using the **SIRE CODE**. When entering a **BRED** event with a bull that is being used for the first time, type in the complete sire code (e.g. 200H3677 or 11J2354). You will then be prompted to "**Add sire to sire list**" Enter "**Y**" for yes. Type in the sire short name and press enter (maximum 8 characters). This sire will now be on the sire list. For subsequent breedings, type in the short name and it will automatically open the sire list to the sire you need.

It is very important to always enter sires by their complete sire code and verify that the info is correct.

For Dairy Comp 305 users that use semen inventory, we recommend that sires are added with the **SIRE CODE** as well. To add a new bull to semen inventory open **Semen Inventory, Choose 7**. Enter bull information.

Enter the **SIRE CODE** of the sire to be added (e.g. 200H1234), it may ask to add to sire list if not there. It will then prompt you to **ADD** to semen inventory.

Click **Yes**, and fill in the required information in the sire information box provided.

After adding the sires to **SEMEN INVENTORY** in this manner, you can go to your **Sire List (ALTER-option 8)** and run **SIRE CLEANUP**. This stamps the new sire to your sire list and will make it available when entering **BRED** events later. If **SIRE CLEANUP** is not run, when entering a **BRED** event with the new sire, you will need to add the sire like it is a new sire as described above. The deduction of semen straws will work correctly either way.

We strongly encourage all Dairy Comp users to update their program via the internet on a regular basis to ensure you have the most recent sire information file available so Dairy Comp can maintain the sire list with current sire data.

For assistance in setting up semen inventory or questions regarding sire information in your software, please call Dairy Comp support at 1-800-549-4373 x295