Dairy Comp
Tips & Tricks

CANWEST DHI

1-800-549-4373

Handy Advice for Producers using Dairy Comp SCOUT & 305

ISSUE 7

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 mentioned previously, because it contains helpful hints for improving reports or analysis, your suggestions and shortcuts will benefit others. Please provide comments or helpful hints that we can reproduce in future newsletters. Send your comments to Bill Grexton at **bgrexton@canwestdhi.com**

Increased Command space in Dairy Comp

Jeromy Ten Hag, Dairy Comp Software Support

For a number of Dairy Comp 305 users, the issue of command space always comes up. A way to create more space to store all the commands that you need is to convert to a Version 5 cowfile. This process creates twice as much space to store commands needed to create the reports and graphs that you need.

To convert your program to version 5, simply type **CONVERT\OV5** at the command line and this will convert your cowfile and any archive files stored in the program directory.

Added benefits of converting your cowfile to the new version are:

1. *Increased space on the sire list. This convert creates the space to store 3,072 sires*

2. *Increased space on the breeding code and technician table. Version 5 will allow you to track 32 different technicians and 32 different breeding codes*

3. *Use of alphanumeric pen labels. If you group cows, you can convert your group numbers into group descriptions. Instead of group=1 you can use group = Fresh group*

This conversion process will not interfere with any transfer of data to DHI field staff on test day or to advisors that load data into their Dairy Comp.

The expanded cowfile will make it easier to store all the data reporting tools needed to manage your herd.

HOWEVER, this conversion will NOT increase Item or Event space and does not affect SCOUT cowfiles. Sorry!
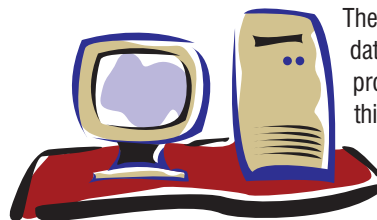
Regular mail or email - how would you like to receive this newsletter?

This newsletter is currently being **mailed** to all Dairy Comp users. However, we now have the option of emailing you the Tips & Tricks newsletter. If you would like to receive your newsletter by email instead of regular mail, please send an email to bgrexton@canwestdhi.com with the subject line **"please email me tips and tricks"**.

All future Tips & Tricks newsletters will then be sent via email and regular mailing will be discontinued. **I have received some replies but I suspect many more want this service – please let me know.**

Protect your computer data

Chris Perry, Dairy Comp Software Support

There are rare occurrences where computer data including a cowfile in your Dairy Comp program becomes corrupted or deleted. If this happens, the cowcard data can be quickly restored from a backup file kept by you. If you don't have a personal backup, a backup archived at DHI could be used (if on milk recording).

The risk of corruption of computer data can be easily reduced by ensuring the three key causes are covered on your computer:

1) **Power Surge:** Probably the number one cause for data corruption. Purchase of a Battery Backup Surge Protector will not only aid in protecting your computer data, but also your computer hardware. (Please ensure that if a phone line is connected to your computer that the phone line is routed through your Battery Backup Surge Protector as well.)

2) **Low RAM:** Not only does low RAM result in a slow running computer, it can also increase the risk of corrupting or loosing some data. If using a Windows XP operating system or older, a minimum of 256 MB of RAM is recommended. If using Windows Vista you should ensure at least 1 GB of RAM. If you are low in RAM, additional RAM can always be added.

3) **Viruses:** Some viruses can inhibit certain features of Dairy Comp as well as delete or corrupt your data. It is recommended to always have up-to-date virus protection running on your computer. Most people think they are safe without virus protection if they are not online. It is possible for a computer to become infected without being online.

Fortunately the corruption of computer data is rare. However, data loss can be serious so please ensure you backup your data regularly as well as protect yourself against the three key causes.
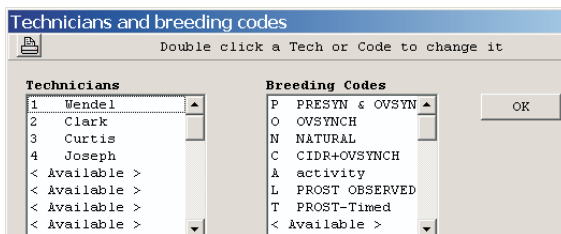
Bred Event information

Jeromy Ten Hag, Dairy Comp Software Support

Have you ever wondered about the conception rate of cows bred from a synch program or of cows bred on an observed standing heat? Maybe you were wondering about conception rates based on the time elapsed between observed heat signs and when the insemination actually took place. Dairy Comp products use breeding codes to capture treatments or events surrounding an insemination when recording a BRED event. The breeding codes are completely user defined and can be setup to record information regarding the two scenarios mentioned above.

The setup of the breeding code table is done by accessing the ALTER module. **In SCOUT, choose FILE** off the main menu. **In Dairy Comp, type ALTER** at the command line and press enter. You would then **choose option E. Breeding and Technicians.**

The breeding code is entered by double clicking on an <available> slot in the Breeding codes column. Add a letter that represents the information you want to capture, and then add your description. A Breeding Code Table example is shown below.

When entering a BRED event, you will be prompted to enter a breeding code off the table that you defined. If you need to enter a second breeding code, you could use the technician table as a second breeding code table. In the above case, the user chose to enter technicians. You will need to determine which information is most useful to you.

Now that you have breeding code information entered, conception rates can be calculated on the breeding code entered.

To access the conception rate data; Choose **RPR + CUL** from the main menu; **in SCOUT, choose Conception by Code. In Dairy Comp, choose Repro Analysis – Cows and then choose 5. Breeding code.** This report summarizes the conception rate for each breeding code entered. A note of caution; be aware of the number breedings included to make the conception rate measure. It may be too small to be significant.

Getting more out of Dairy Comp and Scout

Bill Grexton, Herd Management Services

Dairy Comp is a software program that can do many things to assist with herd management activities. In most cases, users have only tapped a small part of the potential of the program.

What from the following list, do you use your program for?

- **Action list**   to find an animal that needs intervention
  - To breed, to dry off, to treat
  - To move to another group
- **Basic animal information**   is it ALL there?
- **Animal event history**
  - Breeding and pregnancy events
  - Health events (all of them?)
  - Management intervention (e.g. hoof trim)
- **Exception Lists**   cows that need to be found quickly
  - For production reasons
  - For reproductive reasons
  - For health or udder health reasons
- **Setting up breeding protocols**
- **Evaluating trends in the herd**   how do you do it and what reports do you use?
- **Identifying cull candidates**   many repor ts can be modified to add what you need to know and use
- **Tracking progress of replacements**
- **Tracking effectiveness of people and programs**
- **Managing and tracking parlor efficiency**
- **Registering animals**
- **Maintaining a CQM record**

If Dairy Comp software can replace one or two other records you are currently keeping, why not put it all in one place? The impact of the crossover of information will make it worthwhile, and it is surely easier to maintain one record rather than two or three.

As a project, why not take one item from this list that you are currently not using Dairy Comp or Scout for, and start using the program more effectively?

2008
Herd Management Conference

January 15, 2008	January 16, 2008	January 17, 2008
Winchester Community Hall	Tavistock Memorial Hall	PMD Community Centre
Winchester, Ontario	Tavistock, Ontario	Drayton, Ontario

For more information, please call 1-800-549-4373