

appears at the bottom with the following categories: General, Production, Udder Health, Reproduction, and Genetics. I expanded the General Area and found I had 226 herds in the comparison with an average of 481 cows. I then began my comparison for each of the production areas.

Reviewing Performance

Production

Figure 1 illustrates some of the information available under Production. Similar information is available under each of the other categories. I have only extracted a part of the production information in Figure 1 due to space limitations.

From this information, you can see the herd I evaluated has a good rolling herd average (87th percentile among the herds) and good daily milk production. The second lactation and greater animals are milking well in early lactation and all animals have a strong peak milk production. This herd is ranked at greater than the 80th percentile for each of these parameters. However, early lactation performance of 1st lactation animals, as well as butterfat production in this herd should be discussed as an opportunity as the percentile rankings are very low.

Udder Health

Udder health information for this herd is not available. The herd is not currently testing for somatic cell counts (SCC). This is unfortunate because it provides a tremendous amount of information relative to the mastitis control program so the herd can maximize milk quality and udder health in his herd. The cost for SCC testing is very reasonable for the information it provides.

Reproduction

Reproductive performance in this herd is currently very good with a 21-day pregnancy rate of 23 percent. How do you think that ranked among my comparison herds? It was at the 95th percentile. Only 5 percent of herds had a higher 21 day pregnancy rate. I am a reproductive specialist and like to work with improving reproduction on herds but I would not recommend any changes due to the

excellent reproductive performance in this herd. Actually, I had a long conversation with the herd owner about the factors which have resulted in such good performance. This herd has good people implementing an outstanding management program incorporating timed AI and utilizing Select Sires' semen.

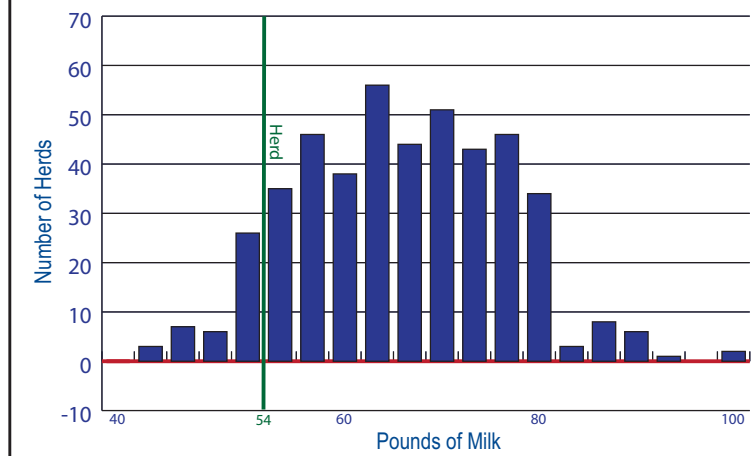
A picture is worth a 1,000 words

Another outstanding aspect of the DairyMetrics system is its graphing capability. The graphs are selected by clicking on the "Graphs" tab at the top of the page. **Figure 2** illustrates the distribution of 1-40 day milk for 1st lactation animals in the comparison herds and how this particular herd's value compares. You can clearly see that this herd is below average.

A powerful analytical tool

Based on this description you can clearly understand that using the Dairy-

Figure 2: 1-40 day milk distribution for selected herds



Metrics benchmarking system from Dairy Records Management Service (DRMS) is fairly easy. Another great advantage is that there is no charge to producers or consultants for using it.

In this article I have only described some of the features and illustrated its use in one example herd. DairyMetrics is a powerful analytical tool and I encourage you to take the time to visit the Web site and explore it. DairyMetrics can provide some interesting perspectives on your herd's performance when compared to the overall performance of herds in your region. ★

DHI Lab Quality Certification now includes John's testing

The National DHIA board of directors recently accepted standard guidelines and procedures for ELISA testing in DHI laboratories. This action makes ELISA testing part of the Quality Certification Services audit that all DHI laboratories participate in annually. Along with AntelBio, eight DHI labs across the U.S. and Canada currently perform John's ELISA testing for their members.

AntelBio's research has proven much can be learned about the health and condition of dairy cows through further analysis of DHI milk samples. The recently implemented guidelines and procedures also allows for the use of other ELISA tests such as leukosis, BVD and progesterone.

"A formal quality assurance program will provide greater consistency in testing procedures," stated Todd Byrem, Ph.D., Director of AntelBio. "By incorporating guidelines and procedures for ELISA testing into their program, National DHIA will be able to quickly adopt and implement new testing services as they become available." All DHI laboratories running the AntelBio Milk ELISA test for John's will implement the standard guidelines and procedures beginning January 1, 2008.

