

DHI records provide valuable udder health data

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Many dairy producers and consultants cannot imagine trying to manage a herd's udder health without using the results of their Somatic Cell Count (SCC) through DHI testing. At NorthStar DHI Services there are several different ways to utilize your DHI records to monitor, manage and measure a herd's udder health. Udder health data are valuable pieces of information, crucial to the overall performance of a herd's health, production and reproduction efficiency, in addition to being the key to producing top quality milk for the consumer. Let's take a look at three of the ways you can look at and analyze udder health information.

Hot Sheet

The *Hot Sheet* lists every cow in index number order that received component information. Also listed are the cow's milk weight, butterfat and protein percentages, linear somatic cell score, actual SCC, days in milk, lactation number and milk urea nitrogen (MUN) if desired. The second section of the report ranks the top 20 cows that affect your total bulk tank SCC level. This weighted ranking is based on the individual cow's daily milk production and her own SCC.

Two key columns to review on the *Hot Sheet* are what the average SCC would be minus that individual cow's milk from the herd and the percentage of somatic cell score she contributes to the total herd's SCC. NorthStar's milk analysis labs offer the *Hot Sheet* service to any dairy producer whose records are processed through DRMS. The *Hot Sheet* can be emailed, faxed or mailed as soon as the herd's milk samples are tested in the lab, making it a very timely and valuable tool.

PCDART

PCDART offers several reports which can analyze the management of your herd's udder health. In addition, you can create reports specifically for your herd to further investigate and manage the identified challenges.

A key report to consider for evaluating udder health is a comparison of each new fresh cow identifying their SCC at dry off; their previous lactation average SCC and their first test SCC. All of this data can indicate the progress of a herd's transition program from one lactation to the next.

The most often utilized PCDART report to evaluate udder health is #802. This standardized report identifies cows and their lactation number along with stage of lactation and average SCC. This table gives you a quick and easy read on the udder health summary of the herd to address any concerns before having to identify individual cows. PCDART offers many report options, but the most unique aspect of the program is your imagination is the only limiting factor in tailor making a report that fits your herd's management program.

DHI – 521 Report

The report used most by DRMS processed herds for identifying udder health performance within the herd is the DHI-521 Somatic Cell Summary. This is a standardized report that many producers receive after test day with their paper reports. While there are a variety of numbers to look at, this report is best analyzed by using the DHI Templates which were distributed producers using NorthStar DHI Services in early 2005.

Date of Test	% Cows by SCC Score					SCC	
	0,1,2,3 Below 142,000	4 142,000- 283,000	5 284,000- 565,000	6 566,000- 1,130,000	7,8,9 over 1,130,000	Score	Actual
Month Dropped	75	9	7	6	3	2.0	203
6/28/2005	77	10	4	6	3	2.1	162
7/27/2005	69	14	6	5	6	2.4	253
8/31/2005	59	16	9	7	9	3.1	369
9/30/2005	73	10	8	4	5	2.5	240
10/31/2005	78	9	6	3	4	2.0	170
11/30/2005	73	11	8	3	5	2.3	244
12/29/2005	78	10	4	3	5	2.1	167
1/27/2006	77	11	5	4	3	2.1	196
2/22/2006	78	9	7	2	4	2.0	160
3/30/2006	81	10	5	2	2	1.8	145
4/24/2006	78	9	5	3	5	2.1	228
6/8/2006	82	8	5	3	2	1.7	115
Averages	75	11	6	4	4	2.2	204

The yearly mastitis summary provides a good over-all view of your herd's SCC. When problems are identified, more detail can be viewed on the same report by reviewing the stage of lactation profile and somatic cell count summary by lactation.

In analyzing this report through the template it shows the percent of cows infected within the herd with a linear score of 3.9 and higher. In addition, it displays the number of newly infected cows by lactation number since the previous test day; as well as the number of chronic infections currently in the herd, which indicates the number of infected cows from the previous test day that still have a SCC linear score greater than 3.9. From this report, you can also analyze days in milk, lactation number and herd average SCC by test day. Using the DHI template with the 521 report offers a quick read on your herd's udder health performance.

With the *Hot Sheet*, PCDART and the DHI-521 Report and report template, NorthStar Cooperative offers numerous ways to analyze your herd's udder health performance. By utilizing this information in combination with good management practices, quality premiums earned more than make up for the cost of regular DHI testing.

For more information on DHI testing or available options to manage your herd's udder health visit with the area NorthStar DHI technician.