

Tools to monitor your herd's performance

First in a Series



The ability to use records effectively is a cornerstone of herd management and is necessary to determine if adjustments need to be made in current practices. Complete herd records provide the tools necessary to define historic herd performance, assist in establishing goals and allow monitoring to determine the impact of management changes.

The first step in record analysis is to identify key components of performance that affect the desired outcome or goal. Through the use of Select RePRO Analysis™ and Dairy Production Analysis (DPA) NorthStar is able to provide you with analysis assistance.

While these two programs evaluate your own herd's performance, NorthStar can take it one step further for you by using DairyMetrics, a web-based system available through Dairy Records Management System (DRMS) to benchmark your herd against others of similar size and in your geographic territory. DairyMetrics provides access to over 2 million cow records (in 15,000 herds) each year to compare with, making it the largest group of records for comparison in the industry today.

Over the next several months, The Point will include information about all three of these analysis and benchmarking services. For this issue we will focus on reproduction analysis using the Select RePRO Analysis™ software.

Evaluating Reproductive Performance

Table 1 reflects a list of important reproduction goals for a typical dairy. These benchmarks for reproductive performance each have intervention levels for monitoring the management practices of a dairy herd.

Using Select RePRO Analysis™ software all of these reproduction parameters and more can be evaluated. In this issue we will review pregnancy rate and hard count of pregnant cows.

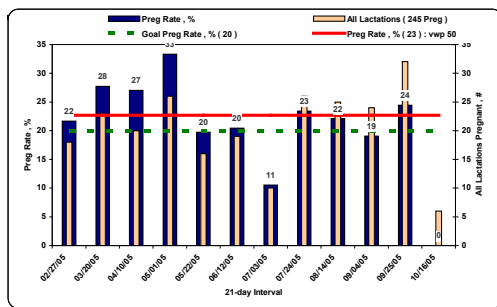


Figure 1. Pregnancy rate by 21-day interval for a herd that utilizes tail chalking as primary method of determining cows to inseminate.

Pregnancy Rate

Pregnancy rate is the reproductive performance benchmark that ties everything together and should be the cornerstone of any reproductive performance evaluation.

Pregnancy rate can be defined as the probability that an eligible, open cow will become pregnant within a 21-day period.

Pregnancy rate is a product of the A.I. submission rate and the conception rate.

At the end of the day, pregnancy rate is really what is most important to dairy profitability. Most herds should set a goal of at least 20 percent and as long as this

goal is achieved, it makes little consequence in the bigger picture as to what the A.I. submission rate or conception rates were that got you there.

Hard Count of Pregnant Cows

From a timing aspect, another important question is how many pregnant cows must be generated weekly to maintain herd size and the desired calving interval.

Without a constant flow of pregnancies into the herd, the milking string will be destined for a less than optimal head count at some point in the future.

Summary

Excellent reproductive performance is essential for long-term success and Select RePRO Analysis™ can assist with monitoring and managing that aspect of your dairy.

For more information on monitoring reproductive performance parameters or to schedule an analysis for your herd talk to your area NorthStar representative.



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Table 1. Eight benchmarks of reproductive performance with intervention levels for monitoring dairy management policies.

Item	Goal	Intervention
Days in milk at first service, %	≤75	>100
Days in milk at first service >100, %	<5	≥15
Conception rate at first service, %	≥35	<25
A.I. submission rate 1, %	≥60	<50
Pregnant by 150 days in milk, %	≥60	<50
Pregnant rate by estrous cycle, %	≥20	≤12
Abortions, %	<10	>10

¹ A.I. submission rate includes both cows inseminated by timed A.I. or detected estrus.

² Abortions for pregnancy loss after 60 days.