

APCS Testing Can Help

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Pa. DHIA offers over 25 testing programs. In this column, I am attempting to explain how each program works. For this column, I have edited an article written by lab manager, Linda Scibilia, for the June, 1988 supervisor's newsletter. The APCS program is well accepted and has some definite pluses. It offers better control over the refrigerated sample, increased speed in fast milking and 3X herds, as well as increased accuracy in some cases.

Understanding APCS

The APCS testing program available to members of DHIA appears to have created some confusion among supervisors and members alike.

Everybody knows what it is, but nobody seems able to explain it ... at least not very well.

Many supervisors have called to find out exactly how the program works, and why a member should consider buying.

Those who do understand what it is have questioned accuracy of the program as compared to some of the more traditional testing plans. There are a jumble of questions and issues rolling around about APCS. Let's see if we can separate and address them.

The letters APCS stand for "AM-PM Component Sampling." The confusion begins with the name, because as soon as you hear AM-PM, you think of the AM-PM program and only one supervised milking. The AM-PM part of APCS applies to the sampling only, not the number of supervised milkings. With the APCS program, you still weigh every milking in a 24-hour period. The difference is that, instead of taking part of the sample at each milking, you take

your entire sample at one of the two (or three) milkings. You still take weights at every milking.

The accuracy question is a good one, and has frequently been raised concerning the AM-PM testing program.

We all know that it is a rare beast who produces the same milkfat percentage in the morning milk as she does in the evening. It depends, heavily, on what the milking intervals are.

If the milking intervals (hours between milkings) are 12 hours and 12 hours, the fat percentage is usually closer than for intervals of 14- and 10-hours, but rarely does the percentage stay the same. Research has shown it can jump as much as two full points (2.60 to 4.50 in one case) from one milking to the next!

So how do we reconcile these differences to come up with an accurate lactation record for a cow?

The milk production is not a problem. We already said that all milkings in a 24-hour period are supervised and weighed. So as far as milk production goes, we are in the same situation as we are with a cow on regular DHI. The total of all milkings in the 24-hour period gives us the cow's 24-hour production.

The fat percentage, however, is

factored using the same factors as the regular AM-PM program.

The factors used for fat depends on the milking interval preceding the sampled milking. The actual fat percentage in the sample you send

us is multiplied by the appropriate factor to give us the fat percentage that the cow would have produced had you taken a composite sample (a proportional amount from each milking). That is why it is very important for you to report milking hours as accurately as possible, and for you to tell us which milking was sampled, by filling in a "1," "2," or "3" in the milking box.

Sometimes the factoring brings the fat percentage up from the actual percentage in the sample, and sometimes it brings it down. We always end up, however, with the percentage representing 24-hour production.

The accuracy of the AM-PM program has been questioned and tested many times, and has held its own. Figures I have seen have shown AM-PM to be 96- to 98-percent as accurate as weighing and sampling daily.

Additionally, the APCS program is useable in DHIR herds, so the breed associations have also recognized the usefulness and accuracy of the APCS program.

Why should a member consider the APCS program over some other testing program?

Some will benefit; some will not. The primary benefit of the APCS program, in many instances is to the supervisor. The APCS program saves you some work because, at one of the two milkings, you only have to read the meter and record the weight-

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Average Farm Feed Costs For Handy Reference

To help farmers across the state to have handy reference of commodity input costs in their feeding operations for DHIA record sheets or to develop livestock feed cost data, here's this week's average costs of various ingredients as compiled from regional reports across the state of Pennsylvania. Remember these are averages so you will need to adjust your figures up or down according to your location and the quality of your crop.

Corn, No. 2y - 3.08
Wheat, No. 2 - 2.795
Barley, No. 3 - 2.04
Oats, No. 2 - 1.28
Soybeans, No. 1 - 6.02
New Ear Corn, - 83.25
Alfalfa Hay - 90.00
Mixed Hay - 78.00
Timothy Hay - 82.75

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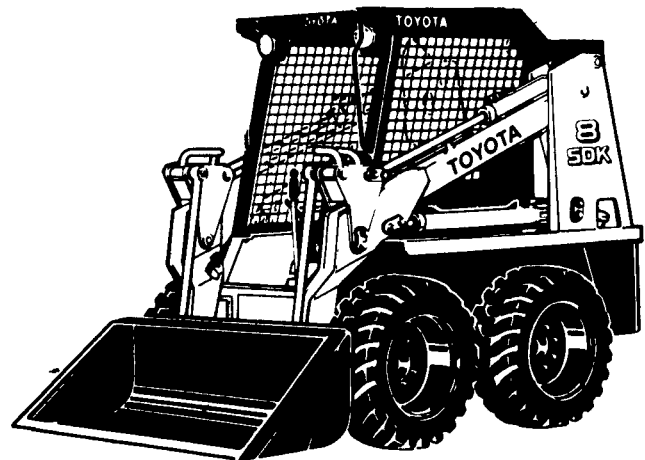
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