



Testing: What's Good For Dairyman Is Good For Dairy Testing

BOB ORMSBY
Pa. DHIA Director Member Education

The AM/PM type testing plans are not new to Pennsylvania DHIA. Their popularity has increased steadily since their inception.

Briefly, AM/PM means that one milking is not supervised during the regular test day activities. All milking times for that day are recorded and a complex formula is applied to the milk, fat and protein data to represent the missed milking.

Due largely to the tightening dairy economy and increased demand for time, DHIA members across the state have adopted AM/PM testing as the program of choice.

Approximately 44 percent of the 6,100 herds on test in Pennsylvania are enrolled in one of the A/P programs. Why is it growing in popularity?

I can identify three reasons; it is convenient, economical and accurate.

CONVENIENT

Let's take a look at convenience.

Each month, the supervisor makes one visit to the farm and "monitors" one milking. Milk-weights, samples and other herd management data are all collected during the one milking visit. At the conclusion of the milking, the supervisor cleans up his equipment, packs up and is on his way, leaving the dairyman free to get back to his busy schedule.

Compare that to leaving the equipment and returning to monitor the next milking to record milk-weights and collect samples from the same cows.

The A/P factors can accurately determine each cow's production from the one milking each month.

Many dairymen experience a slower pace on test day because of the "testing" routine and they have welcomed the single visit alternative.

With the factors calculated, the members receive the same management information as those who purchase 2X DHI records.

For 3X herds, the A/P program requires two visits to the farm by the supervisor, still eliminating one milking.

ECONOMICAL

Now for the economical advan-

tage. That is fairly obvious.

Labor means wages. The supervisor fees are reduced to the member because of the one visit, but he is freed to do another herd that day, increasing the number of herds that can be serviced.

Of course, there are programs where the supervisor does not have to stay at all, but for an "official" A/P test he is required. That also leaves the responsibilities of the equipment and samples to the supervisor, making him well worth the wages.

The Pa. DHIA supervisor is a trained professional and the increased opportunity to test more herds is a viable incentive for top notch supervisors.

ACCURATE

The third point is accuracy. Several research studies to determine accuracy of A/P factoring have proven that the AM/PM program is just as accurate as the conventional 2X DHI herds.

Some of the studies were done in herds where the cows were milked with computerized equipment that recorded each cow's production to the 10th of a pound, every milking.

With 98 percent accuracy, under these conditions, A/P testing is indeed a reasonable alternative to 2X or 3X testing.

The key to the whole process is the alternating of the monitored milking from a morning milking one month to an evening milking the next.

In any given lactation, half of the tests should represent evening and the other half morning milkings. This is necessary to accommodate herds that milk on something different than a 12-hour schedule, cows that vary from morning to night and component tests that vary.

While on accuracy, I must note the quality of the milk sample.

With A/P testing, the vial is on the farm once, filled completely, and is representative of that milking.

With 2X herds, it is difficult to predict variations in the amount of milk from one milking to another, thus permitting the possibility of not getting a proportionate sample of the two milkings. This is alleviated with the A/P program.

Also, the single milking sample is refrigerated after milking and stays there until tested at the lab.

How Does Your Herd Compare?

STATE COLLEGE (Centre Co.) — This data is pulled from Pennsylvania DHIA's mainframe computer each week. It is a one-week summary representing approximately one-fourth of the herds on test, as they are tested monthly.

These data are valuable from a business management standpoint and can be used for comparing your operations to the averages from almost 1,400 herds across the state.

DHIA Averages for all herds processed between 10/24/90 and 10/08/90	
Number of Herds Processed	1,360
Number of Cows Processed	76,197
Number of Cows Per Herd	56.0
Milk Per Cow (Lbs)	17,062
%-Fat	3.67
Fat Per Cow (Lbs)	627
%-Protein	3.19
Protein Per Cow (Lbs)	545
Average Days in Milk Per Cow	315
*Value for CWT Milk(\$)	14.78
*Value for CWT Grain(\$)	8.08
*Value for CWT Hay(\$)	4.41

*Value for CWT Silage(\$)	1.50
*Value for Pasture Per Day(\$)	.30
*Value for Milk Per Cow Per Year(\$)	2,523
*Feed Consumed Per Cow Per Year(Lbs)	
A: Grain	6,855
B: Hay	2,705
C: Silage	14,439
D: Day Pasture	68
*Feed Cost Per Cow Per Year(\$)	
A: Grain	554
B: Hay	119
C: Silage	217
D: Pasture	21
*Total Feed Cost Per Cow Per Year(\$)	912
*Income Over Feed Costs Per Year(\$)	1,610
*Grain to Milk Ratio	1:2.4
*Feed Cost Per CWT Milk(\$)	5.35
Avg Level For 1,114 SCC Herds	351,966
*Member generated figures	

This eliminates virtually all problems that could possibly arise with increased handling.

Pa. DHIA has an outstanding record for sample quality, so that should never be a factor in choosing a type of testing program. It

just reinforces the accuracy of A/P testing.

AM/PM testing is official in the sense that the supervised A/P records are used by the USDA for sire summaries, and the members must follow the rules and regula-

tions governing official type programs.

However, A/P is also incorporated into the "unofficial" type programs; owner-sampler and PRIME, where the records are

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