

DHIA Changes For Next Century

Pennsylvania is putting an increased emphasis on AM/PM DHIA testing and innovative programs to position DHIA for the next century. Recently announced changes in pricing place AM/PM plans in a more favorable light against the traditional twice a day regimen, and new experimental types of test may help some dairymen save additional money on their monthly DHIA bills.

In the last year alone, about 20 percent of DHIA members have switched from 2X programs to AM/PM programs, and the move to AM/PM hasn't slowed yet. In just the closing weeks of the year, more than a hundred herds changed testing schemes, continuing a trend that was strong throughout 1994.

"There's no doubt that AP is the wave of the future," said Dean Amick, PA DHIA's director of field services. "We're now at 2/3 of all herds on test using AP, and I wouldn't be surprised if that number is more like 3/4 of herds by spring."

The charts of enrollment in various types of test in 1993 and 1994 tell the story. While official records continued to provide the bread and butter of DHIA's business at around 90 percent — a number that has remained stable over the years — the shift in official plans to AM/PM is clear. (see charts)

"I think two things really account for the push," Amick said, "the Holstein Association's acceptance of AP tests was one factor, and of course our own pricing changes were the other."

Are members happy about the change?

"For the most part, yes," Amick said, "although some folks are still skeptical about AP. No matter how long the program's been around, or how good the research is, there will always be some skeptics. But we really don't have any choice. By far and away the biggest cost we have is putting a technician on the farm on test day, and AM/PM reduces that cost to the farmer, and to us, by one test per day. It's as simple as that."

But is there any reason to be suspicious of AP testing?

Not according to Jim Boyer, Pennsylvania DHIA's Processing Center manager.

"If you look at the comparison between milk shipped and milk weighed on test day, that's what counts. And we see virtually no difference between AP and 2X plans. In fact the overage between 2X milk weighed and shipped, and the same numbers for AP is slightly smaller, showing that, if anything, AP testing may be just slightly more accurate. Statistically speaking we see virtually the same average, and the same overall distribution." (see chart)

"If you don't think the numbers will apply in your herd, there's a good test available," he said. "The DHIA technician's laptop program allows him to calculate total milk weights. If you're currently testing 2X, have the technician run the AP total calculation the next time he's in your barn. Right after the first milking print off a list of total milk weights and compare the results with what you actually see after the cows are milked the second time. Maybe you'll still find that AP isn't for you, but you may be surprised."

On the leading edge of DHIA testing plans are the LER, or Labor Efficient Records programs, now in their seventh year.

Under LER testing, a farmer with electronic metering equipment takes milk weights on a monthly or semi-monthly basis and forwards those results to the DHIA processing center, either electronically or on diskette. Milk is only actually weighed and sampled by the DHIA technician on a quarterly basis.

"Pennsylvania DHIA was one of the first in the country to be involved in this program, and we've seen slow but steady growth," Boyer said.

"As on-farm computing becomes more and more common, I expect the LER type programs to really take off. At this point, I'm not sure how many of our dairymen really even know about them. We have about two dozen herds on the option. Mostly, but not exclusively, the larger herds have signed up so far."

Beyond LER there are a number of innovative or experimental programs. Some of the options available include: alternate DHI supervised and owner supervised tests on test day, alternate DHI supervised and owner supervised tests on a monthly basis, APCS quarterly sampling, and a number of variations on the 2X LER program for those herds with electronic meters.

Amick said that right now Pennsylvania has about 75 herds enrolled in various innovative options, and points out that not all of them are restricted to herds with electronic equipment.

"Some of the best innovative plans are designed around letting the member take some of the milk weights and have the technician take the others when he comes to sample," he said.

"There are a lot of alternatives, both for cost-savings, and in order to minimize the amount of inconvenience a DHIA technician might cause on test day. I really say that no technician should have anybody quit DHIA anymore. We just have so much flexibility in what we can allow in official programs that we never had in the past."

But Amick cautioned that the innovative plans, while official, are regarded as "provisional" by National DHIA.

"I don't doubt in the long run most of these are going to be made regular DHIA tests," Amick said. "That's what happened with LER,

which was once an innovative plan. In the meantime, I have dairymen check with their AI units, or with their breed associations to see how they feel about a particular innovative program. While we might allow it, somebody at a bull stud might have questions if the herd is on a young sire program, for example. When in doubt, call the people who are using your records outside of DHIA to be sure."

Call DHIA if you're interested in LER or innovative plans for your own herd, and ask for Dean Amick at 1-800-DHI-TEST.

Kindig Receives Leadership Award



Robert Kindig

EVERETT NEWSWANGER
Managing Editor

STATE COLLEGE (Centre Co.) — Robert Kindig, the Pennsylvania dairyman from Conestoga in Lancaster County, received the Clyde Robinson Leadership Award at the Pennsylvania DHIA annual meeting.

The award created two years ago

by the board of directors is in memory of the late Clyde Robinson, who spent a lifetime in service to the dairy industry and especially DHIA. It is given to a dairy farmer who has proven to be a leader in the dairy industry.

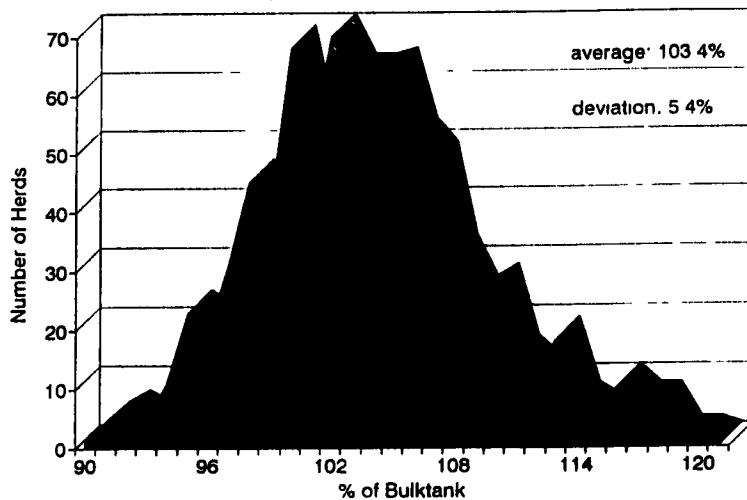
Frank Omer, association president, made the presentation and said Kindig exemplifies the ideals that were put forth in the award. Having completed an unprecedented three-year term as president of the National DHIA, Kindig has also served as president of his state and local DHIA, as well as the local school board. In addition, he has been a 4-H leader and served on the local extension board and the county Holstein board.

In a written tribute, Glenn Shirk, Lancaster County Agent, said Kindig is perceptive to the needs of the dairy industry and how people, in spite of differences, can work together to the mutual benefit of all.

Obviously moved by the award, Kindig said the award was especially meaningful because of whom it was named. "Clyde was my mentor," Kindig said. "I try to live up to the ideals he set for DHIA, but I never profess to have achieved that stature in the industry. Clyde was an example to follow and it is with sincere gratitude that I accept the award."

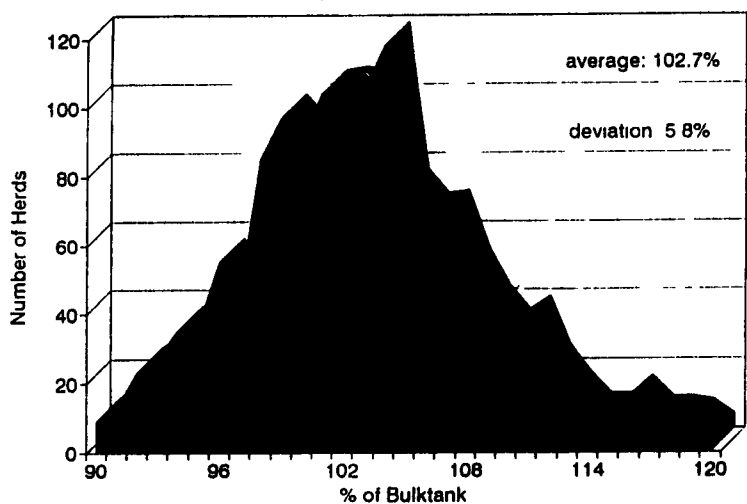
BulkTank v. Testday Milkweights

2X Supervised (DHI) Herds in 1994



BulkTank v. Testday Milkweight

AM/PM Herds in 1994



New Herds List

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| Beaver
Allen Barr Holsteins, Swiontek Dairy Farm. | Clarion
Ken Crissman, Jeff/Galye Jones. | Lebanon
Chris & Steph Anderson. | Snyder
Enos L. Horst. |
| Bedford
Mervin Weaver, Tom & Karen Eshelman, Mark Snyder, Mervin Z. Martin, Winding Brook Farm, Warren Oberholtzer. | Clearfield
Steve Hansel, Blackburn Dairy Farm. | Luzerne
Andy Zagata
Lycorning
Scott & Rhonda Lovell, Bryon & Evelyn Bitner. | Somerset
Carey Kimmel, David & Barbara Mast, Harris Farms, Hickory Bottom, Donald Diller, Ernest Holsopple. |
| Berks
Kirbyville Holsteins, John & Beth Schueller, One Hill Farm Moyer, Neil W. Stoudt, Carl Oberholtzer, Aaron R. Martin, David Rohrer, Lee or Timothy Behm. | Clinton
David Z. King, Daniel M. Stoltzfus, David L. Fisher, Ed & Jackie Seyler. | Mercer
B&K Dairy, H. Valley F Ed Andrus. | Susquehanna
Fred Benson, Frank J. Payne, Warrendale Farm, Paul Berdbener. |
| Blair
Robert N. Stultz. | Cumberland
Justa Beauty Colors, Enos Brubaker, Eric Jordan Herd. | Mifflin
Shady-Run Farm, Willows Farm. | Tioga
Lynn-Eddie-Lee Farm. |
| Bradford
Scott Mosier, Denise A. Kneller, Thomascrest Farm, James L. Shedden. | Erie
Dean Bertges, Lorie Schweitzer, Mark Vogel. | Montour
Noah A. Hostetler, A&A Dairy Farm. | Union
Floyd W. Martin, Shoemaker Bros, Zi-Wes J Dairy Farm, Clear Mountain Holstein. |
| Carbon
Steele Farm. | Franklin
Lynn & Rhonda Stone, Stephen N. Leinbach, Charles Geotz, Conrad J. Hege, Mi-Rose Jerseys, Kenneth R. Wadel, Wit-Brook Farms. | Northampton
Heather Ford, Nicole Roth, Carol Kloiber. | Warren
Rolling Acres. |
| Centre
Daniel Warntz, Scarlet Oak Farm, Abner Z. Fisher, Hosterman Bros. | Indiana
Ridge Top Dairy. | Northumberland
Gary Whitmoyer, Gravel Springs Farm, Merle Zimmerman. | Washington
Triple Ridge Acres. |
| Chester
Corner Ketch C. Corp, Paul S. Lapp, John Ray King. | Lancaster
Abner G. Zook, Lloyd M. Brubaker, Leroy S. King. | Perry
Edward & Irene Horn. | Wayne
Foxland Farm, Brian/Bruce Frisbie, James & Linda Billard, Rulle Labar. |
| | Lawrence
Jeff McKissick. | Potter
Bill Vanetten. | Westmoreland
Hixson "J" Farm. |
| | | | York
Scott D. Marsteller. |