

# Higher Somatic Cell Standards Coming Pa.DHIA Testing, Reports Can Help

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PA DHIA

STATE COLLEGE (Dauphin Co.) — As we approach the new millennium, food safety, or in our case milk safety and quality from the cow to the dairy case, will be a watchword.

Even though we have the cleanest milk in the world, the pressure will always be on.

According to Jim Dickrell, president of the National Mastitis Council (NMC), his organization is moving forward to lower the somatic cell count (SCC) regulatory limit from 750,000 to 400,000 cells per milliliter.

The NMC recommends the regulatory limits be lowered to 600,000 SCC by Jan. 1, 2001; 500,000 SCC by June 1, 2002; and 400,000 SCC by Jan. 1, 2003.

They also recommend the limits be calculated using a geometric mean (based on 12 tests over three months) rather than using the simple arithmetic average.

While Pa.DHIA members don't see the lowering of the legal limit to 400,000 cells/ml as a major concern, their SCC average is well below 400,000.

Those with herds not on test, or

managers not using their DHIA information, may be in for problems.

Lowering your SCC well below 400,000 has major benefits beyond ensuring you of a market for your milk. Low SCC count cows produce more milk, demand higher component prices, and are healthier.

By maintaining a SCC count between 100,000 and 300,000, research and history have proven you will generate more income by increased production and higher premium payments.

The cost of the Pa.DHIA test, of treating cows and of discarded milk, will be returned two to six times, depending on your level of infection.

Subclinical mastitis will not show up on the strip-cap or the milk strainer, but will lower your production and rob you of quality premiums and component prices. One or two high count cows could contaminate an entire tank of milk and that situation will get worse as we approach a legal limit of 400,000 cells/ml.

The Pa.DHIA SCC report will pinpoint the problem cows each month and calculate your losses from each cow.

Realizing that a farm manager's time is very short this time of year, be sure to have someone appraise your SCC Report on your behalf, if you cannot.

You are talking about thousands of dollars in losses per year by not paying attention to each cow in your herd. No matter what your herd size is, it all comes down to one cow at a time.

Recommended steps to keep your SCC under control are:

1. Maintain your milking equip-

ment properly by checking the vacuum levels at each milking and by having an expert check your system at least twice per year.

2. Take your milking procedures seriously. Your best people should be milking your cows. Use individual towels, pre-dip and post-dip, and get the milkers on and off in time. I recommend that all your milkers attend a milking school.

3. Test your cows with Pa.DHIA and use this information to treat,

culture, and dry treat high cows. Cows that do not respond to treatment should be beefed.

4. Have your veterinarian review your Pa.DHIA information each month during your herd health check, and act on this information.

By following these steps, you will improve your income, assure yourself of a market for your milk, and make a major contribution to food safety from the cow to the dairy case.

## 1999 PA DHIA State Directors List

District/County	Name/Address	Telephone	Additional Counties
1 Erie	Ralph Gilkinson Mi-Ra Crest 13886 Macedonia Rd Wattsburg PA 16442	814-739-2087	Erie, Crawford, Warren, Mercer, Venango, Forest, Lawrence, Clarion and west New York
2 Westmoreland	Adam Derr Fay-West Holsteins 543 Davis Rd Dawson PA 15428	724-529 0255 529-0717 fax	Butler, Armstrong, Allegheny, Washington, Greene, Westmoreland, Beaver, Fayette, and Indiana
3. Clearfield	Frank Orner Secretary Orner Farms RR 1 Box 88 Rockton PA 15856	814-583-7864 h 814-583 7418 h	Potter, Elk, Cameron, Jefferson, Clearfield, Centre, Clinton, McKean, and west central New York
4. Cambria	William Itle Exec. Member at Large Vale Wood Farm 747 Vale Wood Rd Loretto PA 15940	814-886 4465 886 7171 dairy 886 9619 fax (call first)	Somerset, Blair, Cambria, and Bedford  wcltle@aol.com
5. Huntingdon	John Brodzina Treasurer Brod-Way Farms RR 4 Box 355 Tyrone PA 16686	814-632-8684	Huntingdon, Mifflin, Juniata, and Perry
6. Cumberland	Michele Reasner 120 Red Shed Road Shippensburg PA 17257	717-776 5181	Fulton, Franklin, Cumberland and Adams
7. Bradford	John Wilcox RR 3 Box 449 Troy PA 16947	570 297-4017	Tioga, Bradford and east central New York
8. Columbia	Scott Kriebel RR 2 Box 18 Benton PA 17814	570 925-6275	Lycoming, Sullivan, Snyder, Union, Montour, Luzerne, Columbia, Northumberland
9. Lebanon	Dale Hoover Vice. President 517 Horseshoe Pike Lebanon PA 17042	717 867-2489 867 4958 fax	Dauphin, Lebanon, Schuylkill, Carbon, Monroe, Leigh, Berks, Northampton
10. Lancaster	Norman Hershey President Springarden Farm 4195 Old Philadelphia Pike Gordonville PA 17529	717-768 8126 768-0520 fax	Bucks, York, Lancaster, Chester, Montgomery
11. Susquehanna	John Castrogiovanni, Castlemont Farms RR 1 Box 367 Montrose PA 18801	570 278-3694	Susquehanna, Wayne, Wyoming, Lackawanna, Pike, eastern New York and New Jersey

## Quality Service

## That Exceeds Expectations

**DAVID BIGELOW**  
Training Coordinator

STATE COLLEGE (Centre Co.) — PA DHIA is, in itself, a quality driven cooperative that provides a full range of farm management record keeping options for its membership.

Starting right at the farm with the milk sampling and data collection, the PA DHIA membership controls all aspects of the testing procedures through representation on the state board of directors.

Uniquely positioned, PA DHIA is the only fully-owned DHIA cooperative in the nation which includes field, lab, consulting and processing services.

Aggressive marketing continues to bring favorable results, through the technicians starting a record number of owner-sampler herds on test.

Within the past year, our market share has seen an overwhelming increase of 61 percent or over 6,000 new cows added to the owner-sampler option.

Dairymen continue to benefit from this program since our program is USDA approved, which in essence qualifies owner-sampler herds for young sire programs.

With milk companies demanding the highest of standards in today's competitive world, the somatic cell program continues to be a very beneficial part of the PA DHIA package.

Using the SCC program is helpful in pinpointing lost production due to subclinical (hidden) infections, improper milking procedures, milking equipment malfunctions, percent and level of involvement in the herd, and cows to culture for identification of bacteria causes. Once damaged, cells cannot be replaced until the dry period; production is lost for the entire

lactation.

Make money by reducing lost production. Seventy percent of the cost of mastitis is lost milk production. Above all, lost milk plant premiums due to increased herd SCC can be very trying for today's dairy producer.

PA DHIA technicians continue to network through nutritionists, county agents, vets and other ag professionals to bring the highest quality service to you. Please feel free to contact your technician with any questions concerning your PA DHIA record keeping service.

## PA DHIA Board of Directors District Map

