

Daityman To Dairyman

GEORGE CUDOO PA DHIA Consulting Dairyman

QUESTION: How do we begin efforts that would result in lower somatic cell counts in our herd? When will we need to comply with new standards of 400,000 SCC?

ANSWER: Somatic Cell Count standards have been on the discussion table for quite some time.

There has been talk that our dairy industry needs to catch up with the rest of the world and their standards for SCC.

Recently, I read that the National Conference on Interstate Milk Shipments took "no action" on the proposal out of the National Mastitis Council to lower legal limits of SCC to 400,000 from the current 750,000 limit.

Aside from what is legal or not, there are other considerations that benefit our bottom line by lowering the SCC in our herds.

Lowering SCC results in fewer dollars spent on treating cows that become clincially infected with mastitis. Along with this is a reduction in dollars spent to provide treatment of the more severe cases by a professional veterinarian.

With lowered SCC, our labor

expenses then shift to something more profitable than caring for hospice cows and culling practices will shift away from the involuntary to voluntary.

We are now able to sell milk that would otherwise have to be discarded due to low quality or drug residues.

Lastly, and most importantly, we can ship more milk per dollar invested by reducing the nagging effects of subclinical mastitis. This can conservatively result in 1.5 pounds more milk per cow per day, just by lowering the linear SCC by

At the very heart of reaching our goal in lowering SCC is the DHIA system.

Yes, we can establish good managment practices on our farms based on research, but you need to realize that research comes from recording measurements.

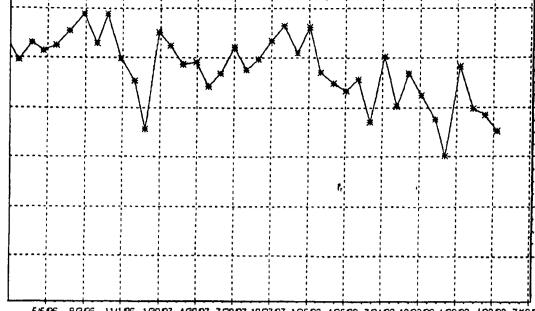
Within our own herds, we have the cows tell us where our management style needs to be better. We do this when we use our records.

The worst thing that can happen is that we blindly attack one problem by changing everything.

The result may be lower SCC, but if we do not know what really gave us results, we can slip right back into the same bad management.

One way to look at your records is to view a graph similar to the example provided (see graph), to see if trends occur during different times of the year.

When looking at this graph, concentrate on the differences



5/5/96 8/3/95 11/1/95 1/30/97 4/30/97 7/29/97 10/27/97 1/25/98 4/25/98 7/24/98 10/22/98 1/20/99 7/19/99

between summer and winter months.

Things such as the environment can influence SCC.

Do we have good fly control? Should we step up stall management when it becomes hot and humid?

What about milking procedure differences when we are busy in the fields?

More questions could be asked, but it is important to note that SCC problems are not constant during the course of the year.

We may want to look at some other things like SCC differences between groups, or maybe we need to look at SCC differences between lactations.

Once we answer these questions, we have a better chance of solving our problems.

Tools offered through PA DHIA are available for dairymen to use.

The majority of my time is spent doing these types of record interpretations. Should you need help in this area, feel free to contact me.

Dairyman to Dairyman is a weekly column by George Cudoc, a consulting dairyman to PA DHIA. He can be reached by calling PA DHIA Service Center at (800) 344-8378, or by calling him directly at (724) 625-8971, fax (724) 625-8972; or e-mail GCudoc@fyi.net

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 last 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

Corn, No.2y — 2.42 bu., 4.34

Wheat, No. 2 — 2.44 bu., 4.08 cwt

Barley, No. 3 — 1.38 bu., 2.96

Oats, No. 2 — 1.44 bu., 4.49

Soybeans, No. 1 — 4.36 bu., Ear Corn — 73.55 ton, 3.68 cwt.

Alfalfa Hay — 95.00 ton, 4.75

Mixed Hay — 93.00 ton, 4.65

Timothy Hay — 97.50 ton, 4.88





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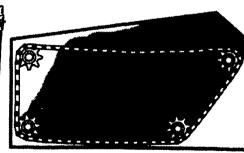
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