

# **DAIRY HERD MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS -**

## **BASIC**

Texas Agricultural Extension Service  
The Texas A&M University System  
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# DAIRY HERD MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

## BASIC PROGRAMS

Basic programs aid the dairyman in making on-the-farm decisions on feeding, breeding, management and cost analyses. These records are not used in the genetic appraisal of cows and sires or in the promotion and sale of animals. This program is to be conducted entirely by dairymen. If the dairyman is interested in a supervised program, he should examine the benefits of a private or official program. All basic programs are returned on forms designed for this program.

- **BHM** - Milk weights are obtained along with milkfat samples if the dairyman desires. The program allows the dairyman four options for the milkfat test.
  - **Individual cow** - From each cow, a milkfat sample is obtained, and the sample is sent to a central milk testing laboratory.
  - **Plant test** - The dairyman uses the plant test as an indicator of milkfat for each cow in the herd.
  - **Breed average** - The dairyman uses the breed average as an indicator of milkfat from each cow in the herd. He can have more than one breed.
  - **None** - No milkfat figure is used.

## HOW TO ENROLL IN A PROGRAM

- **Association** - To enroll in a basic program, no local Dairy Herd Improvement Association (DHIA) needs to be operating in your geographical area.
- **Supervisor** - No supervisor is needed.
- **Dairyman** - It takes a willing dairyman to enroll in a basic program. The dairyman does all the recording and weighing. Once enrolled, the dairyman should

use his records for better management and decisionmaking.

- **Measuring Devices** - Any type of measuring device may be used.

## **WHAT MUST BE REPORTED MONTHLY?**

- **Dairyman** - The dairyman maintains a form for recording dates for calving, drying off, disposals, aborting, breedings and heats. He records his own milk weights and obtains a sample for a milkfat analysis if appropriate. In addition to the dates, he also keeps identification of calves and reasons for disposing of cows. All this information should be kept by the dairyman for his normal operation.

## **WHAT CAN A DAIRYMAN EXPECT?**

- **Culling** - An immediate use of the records is for culling. Cows are ranked by their relative position in the herd based on 4 percent fat corrected milk, total income from milk, mature equivalent production and product value. Also, when a cow completes a lactation, a notation is made on a special section of the sheet. All this information can help the dairyman in making sound culling decisions.
- **Management** - Although the man in management is the most important part, he is limited by available information. Records give him individual cow or herd summary information for making management decisions.
- **Production** - Records are furnished on cows by test day weights, lactation to date and complete lactation.
- **Reproduction** - A major problem associated with a dairy operation is reproduction. Records show the age at calving, the number of breedings, bred date and due date. Herd summary information gives the reproductive status of the herd.

- Mastitis - An optional program is the Wisconsin Mastitis test, a screening test for mastitis. The sub-clinical test provides a routine, early defense-warning mechanism to use in herd health programs. The dairyman performs this test on an unpreserved milk sample.
- Special Options - Several features of the computerized DHI program are available on an optional basis in addition to the standard program. These options provide extra service and information for herd management for dairymen requesting such services. Available listings include:
  - Special management list, including:
    - Cows open over 30 days
    - Cows due to calve
    - Cows to turn dry
  - AM-PM record

Your county Extension agent has more information concerning this program, or you may contact The Extension Dairy Specialist, The Texas A&M University System, 110 Herman Heep Building, College Station, Texas 77843.

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