

DairyComp 305 Newsletter

Number 21

Fourth Quarter - 2002

2002 finds the dairy industry reeling somewhat by low milk prices, rising feed costs and for awhile, the highest heifer prices in recent history. Certainly all of us knew that dairy agriculture would not be immune to fluctuations, but it still makes one “tighten up their belt” when milk prices fall 30% for an extended period of time.

We at Valley Agricultural Software have seen some of the influence of belt tightening. However, we feel fortunate to be able to still provide programs and support in these tougher times. Our biggest accomplishment of this year was to get FeedWatch to completion (that is as close to completion as any program ever gets) and to the market – more on this later.

We are also fortunate that we have done a lot of work in the program regarding the economic aspects of dairying. Cow Value has shown itself to be more valuable as heifer prices have increased. Especially with high heifer prices, the value of getting most cows pregnant has increased greatly. To this end, the ground work we’ve laid during the past 4 years in pregnancy rate calculations has helped many to reliably focus on profitable changes to their breeding system and monitor breeding efficiency. Dollars spent in effective breeding programs return big dividends. In a later portion of this newsletter, a review in pregnancy rates and pregnancy values is provided.

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New changes to DC305

The major changes or additions to Dairy Comp 305 have been to add drug inventory interfacing, add 2 new item types that will hold up big numbers, and allow for an expanded cowfile that will hold more cows, sires and commands. Changes have been made in CLEANUP that have the program go through the archive files and remove duplicate records so data analysis can be more accurate. Others involve improving data entry, reports and adding a myriad of small changes that users have suggested that would improve the program. We have also made auto-program updating over the Internet a reality.

DOS Program Changes

It is well to mention here that, for practical purposes, no programming changes are being done for DOS except for bug fixes. The only features that are being added to the DOS program are those necessary for DHIA loop functions to continue to work.

Drug Inventories

Drug inventories are designed to accurately track drug usage and keep an on-going record and log of drug usage. It is tied to protocol usage. A separate program, "DrugWatch" is run along with DC305 and data from protocol event entries is copied to the DrugWatch directory. This data is then processed as treatments and recorded. One needs to enter the DrugWatch program to set up protocols and drug inventories, record drugs coming onto the farm and make reports. Some manual entries are needed for those that cannot be associated with certain animals on a per dosage basis. Water treatments of specific pens for calf pneumonia would be an example. Along the way, re-order points of inventory levels of drugs can be set to notify someone when drugs need to be ordered again along with how much to re-order.

Drug Watch					
Treatments Adjust Inventory					
Inventory	History	Protocols			
Date	Type	Drug	Drug Name	Units	remark
11/14/02	Purchase	0005	GrtMaster	576.0	Manual Entry
11/14/02	Purchase	0002	Penicillin IM	500.0	Manual Entry
11/14/02	Purchase	0032	PolyFlex	288.0	Manual Entry
11/14/02	Treatment	0032	PolyFlex	-2.0	#2 to 75 for Mastitis, Manual Entry
11/18/02	Treatment	0032	PolyFlex	-2.0	#2 to 3 for MAST, HET3RR
11/18/02	Treatment	0002	Penicillin IM	-20.0	#3 to 427 for SICK, PEN20LDA
11/18/02	Treatment	0005	GrtMaster	-4.0	#1 to 22 for DRY
11/18/02	Treatment	0005	GrtMaster	-4.0	#1 to 126 for DRY
11/18/02	Treatment	0005	GrtMaster	-4.0	#1 to 145 for DRY
11/18/02	Treatment	0005	GrtMaster	-4.0	#1 to 205 for DRY
11/18/02	Treatment	0005	GrtMaster	-4.0	#1 to 318 for DRY
11/18/02	Treatment	0005	GrtMaster	-4.0	#1 to 366 for DRY
11/18/02	Treatment	0005	GrtMaster	-4.0	#1 to 523 for DRY
11/18/02	Treatment	0005	GrtMaster	-4.0	#1 to 544 for DRY
11/18/02	Treatment	0005	GrtMaster	-4.0	#1 to 644 for DRY
11/18/02	Treatment	0005	GrtMaster	-4.0	#1 to 736 for DRY

This is an example of the treatment history from DrugWatch. Notice that both the purchases and deduction are listed. Cow 75 was manually entered, the rest came from protocol entries from DC305 being directly transferred to the DrugWatch program.

Inventory History Protocols							
Nada	Name	Reorder Pt	Reorder Qt	Reorder Units	RU:SU	Protocol Units	Stock
0005	QrtMaster	144	4	cases	144	tubes	496.0
0032	PolyFlex	144	2	cases	144	tubes	284.0
0002	Penicillin IM	5	10	Bottles	100	cc's	480.0

The inventory portion shows the current amounts of all drugs. RU:SU is re-order units vs. stock units. For example, there are 144 mastitis tubes in a case. For information on installation and prices, call support.

New Item Types

Two new item types have been added. One, type 31, is designed for international identification numbers that include country codes. These are currently not to be used in the USA. No DHIA processing center can handle them as of the end of 2002. The second, type 32, will hold up to 9 full digits and can be used for permanent ID numbers that are being used in the USA as well as electronic ID numbers used by some meter systems.

Expanded Cowfile – Version 5

Expanding the cowfile has been requested by a few for awhile and we are now taking advantage of the opportunities that Windows allows us to do this. The program sent in the update will work with the existing cowfile with no changes. Some of the features will not be allowed until the conversion is made but, if all is going well, there is no need to convert. The DOS program can still operate on unconverted cowfiles that don't use additional features described below.

When one converts the cowfile to Version 5, the following changes will occur in the cowfile:

1. The cowfile maximum size will go up from 12,000 to 32,000 records.
2. Cow numbers can go up to 65,000 (from 32,000 in the small version).
3. Number of sires allowed in the cowfile will increase from 2000 to 6000.
4. Number of allowable commands will increase from 255 to 511.
5. The number of breeding technicians increases from 8 to 32.
6. The number of user-defined breeding codes increases from 8 to 32.

The maximum file size limitation should handle most dairy situations in the near future. With our improved methods of handling archive records, keeping large numbers of sold and dead animal records in the active data file is not necessary. At the very most, one year of old records is all that should be necessary – and that is for those who need these records for accounting purposes. All previous lactation records should be removed immediately.

The cow ID number limitation will be one that we cannot extend until we switch to a completely different data file for DC305. For those who like to push the limit, we currently have no way of exceeding 65,000 except to go to barn names. Barn names are not a reasonable option for most dairies. They would especially hamper large cowfiles. So, plan ahead and, if it looks like you will possibly exceed this limit, change your numbering plans well before you reach the limit. Please call us if you have any questions regarding cow ID numbers.

Increasing the sire limit has become necessary as herd sizes are increasing and using a higher number of AI sires. Increased numbers are both from sheer increasing herd sizes and the fact that

many buy smaller amounts of any given sire. A 1000 straw purchase that might have contained 8 bulls a few years ago and today might have 50. Keeping track of grand sires has also caused the 2000-bull limit of our sire table to be reached by many. It is hoped that tripling the size of the sire table will suffice for a few years.

Increasing commands will help a few who tax the command table currently. In some ways it is like a messy desk. The bigger it is, the messier it can become! We hope that allowing more commands doesn't mean that more will be made for one use and then forgotten.

Increasing the technicians and breeding codes has become necessary, again to handle larger dairies. In Version 5 we will allow 2 character tech codes. Any code from 1 to 99 can be used. However, only a maximum of 32 codes is allowed. Breeding codes are still one character, so the whole alphabet can be used along with numbers. Using numbers should only be done as a last resort as they will be easily confused with technician numbers when looking at the breeding events.

We have not increased the item table space. While that is on the list of things to do, changing this fundamental storage unit within the cowfile will be a major undertaking and one that will need a lot of planning. Yes, we know that this is needed. We are looking at all the possibilities before tackling this job. It will be a big one.

Converting to Version 5

The actual process to convert is quite simple. We will walk you through this by phone for those users who can do this without affecting their testing organization. However be aware of the following consequences of this conversion:

1. The change is not reversible. Therefore, have good backups in case something goes wrong and you need them.
2. DOS will no longer work on the cowfile.
3. While the program will work with both the old and new versions, you cannot move cows from the new version cowfile into an old version cowfile using PUTCOW. Moving records from old to new cowfile versions is allowed.
4. Quickly, backups will grow and take up more room. Most who do this will want to change their backup procedures to move away from the 1.44 megabyte 3½ in diskette. Many have already gone to ZIP disks. Recently CD's have also become practical to use for backups. (See section on backing up later in this newsletter.)
5. Consultants and others need to be aware of the change. Those who don't upgrade their program will not be able to read your data.

If a conversion is done, all data and archive files should be converted. GETCOW will retrieve a cow from a small version cowfile but it is safest to have all converted.

Changes to both Version 5 and the old version

In both the old version and the Version 5, sires codes can be extended to 9 characters. Thus, 202H12345 will be stored properly. We still store the breed in NAAB codes as a single charac-

ter. When we know it is necessary, we can send a 2-character code. If one enters a sire as 32HO03345, we will store and display in all DC305 reports as 32H3345. The “O” that follows the “H” is not stored along with any leading “0” in front of the bull number. In some cases, such as sending to DHIA centers and interfacing with registration programs, we will send the “full” NAAB code.

Also in both versions, CLEANUP has an added feature of cleaning duplicate records out of the archive files. Running the command CLEANUP\A does this. The procedure will go through all archive files in the path and search and remove duplicate records. Duplicate records are determined by having the same ID and the same archive date. This happens in various cases such as deleting FRESH or SOLD events and then re-entering them, having difficulties when archive files fill up and not getting the transition into a new archive file done properly. Duplicate archive records don’t hurt the day-to-day management of the dairy but they can make errors in those procedures that routinely look through the archive files. These include BRED SUM, EVENTS, ECON, etc. It is recommended that this procedure is run after you install the updates and then periodically as needed. “As needed” basically means run it as frequently as duplicate records are removed. If it is run monthly and no duplicates are found, skip a month or two. Certainly, run this if there are any suspected problems in reports that use archive records.

CLEANUP has an additional feature that might be used by larger dairies. CLEANUP\2 will automatically run cleanup in unattended mode. It will handle full archive files, renaming them as needed. Using this feature, CLEANUP can be run from schedule tasks at a specified time when the computer is not needed for other jobs.

Miscellaneous Program Additions

The following are a partial list of additions that have been made to the program that will be of interest to many:

- DNB Cows – if bred a warning message comes up.
- Plots and graphs will automatically print if they are run in “Batch Mode” (commands connected with an “!”).
- MONITOR can use “[“ and “]” for “<=” and “=>” in constraints. This feature is in both the DOS and Windows DC305.
- Font sizes can be changed in almost all portions of the program, menus, enter screens, and Browser. Setup can set sizes for those screens that don’t have a font button.
- “M” will again work in the Browser to print multiple copies of a report.
- Repro Code 8 added. Now, when a bull calf is born and kept, its RPRO code will be 8 – BULLCAF. This is set automatically. The name can be changed in the Setup / Codes section of the program.
- Activity log continues to be expanded to show what’s been happening in the cowfile.
- Whenever the SUM command is run, a pie chart shows up in the graph section of the data averaged.
- SETUP will allow selection of different printers (if they are defined in Windows also). Color selections are now available for the general program background and for the cowcards.
- ARCP is no longer needed in SETUP parameters for the archive file locations.
- For those who have daily milk meter interfaces, new DMGRAPH and PG305 program files are included on the CD. If there are questions about these programs, call support. DMGRAPH graphs individual cow’s milk weights (graph button on Page 6). PG305 graphs parlor performance parameters over a period of time.

New Events Feature - Analysis Calf Sex, Calf Mortality and Twinning

Choice 3 of EVENTS can now create a table of recent calvings. The table contains the distribution of calves born alive or dead; male or female, and twins. Clicking on a cell will create a detailed list. Each percent (Twins, Females, and Deaths: all, Males, Females) is graphed. A subset of the herd can be selected by using FOR, such as ... FOR LACT=1. The \S Selects a date range, but defaults to the past 365 days.

The percentages are calculated as follows:

None = Fresh with no known information

%Twins = Twins / Fresh

%Female = Female / (Male + Female)

%Dead = Dead / (Alive + Dead)

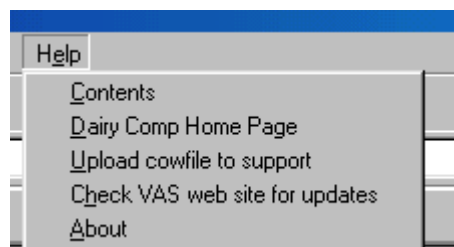
%M:Dead = M:Dead / Male

%F:Dead = F:Dead / Female

Example table:

Month	Fresh	None	Twins	%T	Male	Female	%F	Alive	Dead	%D	M:Dead	%M	F:Dead	%F
3/00	82	11	0	0	37	34	48	64	7	10	4	11	3	9
4/00	127	9	2	2	60	60	50	107	13	11	8	13	5	8
5/00	146	12	7	5	78	63	45	130	11	8	8	10	3	5
6/00	150	21	8	5	74	63	46	132	5	4	3	4	2	3
7/00	158	35	5	3	65	63	49	123	5	4	3	5	2	3
8/00	144	29	1	1	59	57	49	110	6	5	4	7	2	4
9/00	131	19	3	2	70	45	39	106	9	8	9	13	0	0
10/00	198	17	8	4	102	87	46	171	18	10	11	11	7	8
11/00	195	13	7	4	98	91	48	167	22	12	18	18	4	4
12/00	175	8	5	3	92	80	47	163	9	5	7	8	2	2
1/01	196	5	11	6	116	86	43	187	15	7	9	8	6	7
2/01	196	3	6	3	97	102	51	189	10	5	5	5	5	5
3/01	13	1	3	23	9	6	40	12	3	20	2	22	1	17
TOTAL	1911	183	66	3	957	837	47	1661	133	7	91	10	42	5

Additional Help Features



Clicking on the “Help” label of the menu will make the pull-down come to the screen.

“Contents” gets one into the help file located on the hard disk that contains all the documentation of the program.

“Dairy Comp Home Page” will log onto our web site.

“Upload cowfile to support” will put a cowfile to a server of ours that is connected to the Internet. Details follow.

“Check VAS web site for updates” allows you to check for new updates, download them and install them automatically over the Internet.

“About” displays information about the DC305 Windows program

Upload to Support

The support feature of uploading to our server is now possible automatically. We can do this over the Internet, either automatically dialing a dial-up connection or using an existing connection of the computer to the Internet. New computers have been added to our network for this purpose.

We do not have provisions for sending data over the phone line directly to our servers and don't anticipate developing that data transfer method. Internet access is rapidly becoming available to most users who have phone connections to their computers, the phone calls made to connect are usually local not long distant, and we don't need to develop two programs to handle different ways of data coming into our system.

What do we do with the data? Most often the files are sent to us to help with support. Others are using the system to upload data that is then massaged and sent on to others for research, management or consulting purposes. The system can also be used as an off-site backup service. If you wish to start using this service routinely, contact us for setup and pricing information.

Automatic Program Updates

The program can be automatically updated. When this is done, the program logs onto the Internet, checks your support settings and, if they say you may update, updates your program. If this is attempted and there is a failure, we are notified and can look into the problem. It is important that users update their programs using the CD that is sent out at the end of 2002. Be sure to use the latest one and the proper account and program serial numbers. This feature only works with the latest program version.

Internet Connections

Connecting to the Internet is a function of the computer being used. Currently it appears the connecting features will work as follows: A default connection is often setup when the Internet service is installed. Sometimes dial up connection(s) from Windows are used and in others cases direct connections are made. Sometimes the dialing is done before using Internet Explorer and in other cases it is done when the explorer is started up. Using MicroSoft's Internet Explorer, one can go to Tools > Internet Options > Connections and set up the default connection. If a default connection is setup, Dairy Comp will find it and connect to the Internet, do the task it sets out to do and disconnect.

A special mention must be made about AOL. If one uses AOL (America On Line) as their Internet provider, they must have version 7 or higher of the AOL program for these features of our program to work. Earlier versions wouldn't allow us to send files through their Internet system. When this provider's connection is used, we cannot disconnect after the task has been run and the

AOL icon will remain on the task bar until it is manually disconnected or the automatic disconnect timeout is reached.

Daily Backups

Routinely, we see instances in which some clients are being saved by good backup procedures while others are sorry they didn't have any. It is impossible to emphasize the importance of this enough. Good backups don't take long (if they do call us), are cheap (time is money), and nothing can take their place (only you can save your own neck). Remember that all computers fail – it is not a matter of IF they FAIL, but WHEN they FAIL.

Historically, we have not recommended using CD's for backing up cowfiles. This started 4 or 5 years ago when CD writers became available on home computers. Our reasons were that the process was slow and the files became read-only, even when they were copied back to the computer's hard disk. It was a support problem to teach users how to change these back to files that could be fully used. Additionally, 100 and 250 megabyte zip disk became available that were much easier to use.

In the last few months, rewriteable CD's have become available that can work well for backups. To use these, one must buy the rewriteable CD's, format them and then use them. They cost about \$2 - \$5 each and take 25 to 45 minutes to format on the FULL FORMAT METHOD. When using them, you need to make sure you make them so they will be readable by any CD, not just the read-write CD that makes them. This will require drivers on other computers, but they are usually available on later operating systems. Also some CD writers can put the needed drivers on the CD that is being formatted. These disks hold over 600 megabytes, which represents a lot of data.

When working with these in our office, we've discovered a few things about using rewriteable CD's. They appear to work just like a disk when used in the same CD drive. When the CD is taken to another computer with a standard CD, initially software drivers are loaded into second computer's system to be able to read it. On this computer, files that are copied from the CD to the hard disk are set to "read-only". Thus, to seamlessly transfer files from one computer to another, both computers must have similar rewriteable CD drives. Otherwise, the files become "read-only" and then must have this attribute changed before they can be used.

Recent advertisements publicize 750-megabyte zip disks. We've had no experience with them but think they should also be fine. They are reported to require a newer USB port. Also, the drives are said to be able to read 100 MB zip disks, but can write only to 250 or 750 MB disks.

Economic Perceptions of the Dairy Industry – Reproduction

It is obvious that much effort is being made by the dairy industry on the breeding effectiveness. The reasons for this are obvious, especially when replacement costs skyrocket, milk prices fall and feed gets a little more expensive. Basically, cows get pregnant so they will calve again and those who don't get pregnant must be replaced. Using the cow value module, we've seen the value of a pregnancy almost double in the last year or so. Depending on different circumstances, getting pregnant will increase a value of the average cow somewhere between \$400 to \$550. This is a conservative figure. As the calf is carried to term, the pregnancy increases in value; the cow is less likely to abort and closer to freshening, which is why she got pregnant in the first place.

Replacement costs have varied from \$1200 to \$1700 during this past year. This cost must be covered by the sale of milk. Thus, pregnancies increase in value as the replacement cost increases or the milk price decreases as more milk is needed to pay for replacement and less for profit. One can afford to pay quite a bit to get a cow pregnant. We see these per cow costs vary from \$30 to \$70. It really doesn't matter too much what the cost is as long as there are plenty of pregnant cows. When ones gets a \$400 return from either a \$30 or \$70 investment, both are considered good use of money.

The main goal of monitoring records should be to quickly find when something breaks or quickly be able to determine if management changes are beneficial. The pregnancy rate table is a good tool to do this. The chart gives a glance of the last year's breeding accomplishments. It is broken down into 21-day intervals as one can see the variations by interval of all prospective or eligible breedings.

Date	Ht Elig	Heat	Pct	Pg Elig	Preg	Pct	25	50	75	100
8/22/01	283	204	72	261	50	19	P		H	
9/12/01	362	258	71	357	63	18	P		H	
10/03/01	372	277	74	366	77	21	P		H	
10/24/01	368	224	61	364	62	17	P	H		
11/14/01	266	169	64	260	47	18	P		H	
12/05/01	209	118	56	208	41	20	P	H		
12/26/01	186	124	67	182	44	24	P		H	
1/16/02	170	103	61	166	25	15	P		H	
2/06/02	187	130	70	185	47	25	P		H	
2/27/02	198	130	66	195	40	21	P		H	
3/20/02	227	153	67	227	54	24	P		H	
4/10/02	213	122	57	211	33	16	P	H		
5/01/02	228	151	66	222	38	17	P		H	
5/22/02	212	123	58	209	45	22	P	H		
6/12/02	232	152	66	230	48	21	P		H	
7/03/02	213	112	53	211	42	20	P	H		
7/24/02	227	146	64	0	0	0	Undet	Preg	Stat	
8/14/02	202	156	77	0	0	0	Undet	Preg	Stat	
Total	3926	2550	65	3854	756	20	P		H	

Looking at the last few intervals (in the report above) tells us more about the most recent breeding efficiency of this dairy. It is well to remember this procedure looks at all eligible breedings. Many people talk of first service conception or pregnancy rates within the first 100 days. In general, this analysis discards much of the herd. The efforts are made to get all cows pregnant. The value of a pregnancy is not greatly affected by the DIM of the cow when she conceives. Usually, breeding efforts are placed on the whole herd or, if catch bulls are used, on all the AI pens. It is this that is being evaluated. If certain cows are bred fine but others are forgotten, usually the overall breeding suffers.

Perhaps one of the most important figures in the chart is the last heat detection percentage. Often, this figure will be the first to change for either good or bad. This percent is usually the highest on the whole graph and contains the fewest eligible cows. Remember, to be eligible a cow must be beyond the voluntary waiting period, not DNB, known to be open at the cycle's start and present with a known status at the cycle's end.

3/20/02	227	153	67	227	54	24
4/10/02	213	122	57	211	33	16
5/01/02	228	151	66	222	38	17
5/22/02	212	123	58	209	45	22
6/12/02	232	152	66	230	48	21
7/03/02	213	112	53	211	42	20
7/24/02	227	146	64	0	0	0
8/14/02	202	156	77	0	0	0
Total	3926	2550	65	3854	756	20

The 77 circled is the figure we are discussing. As cows that were bred in the previous 2 cycles are found open or come back in heat, they will then be considered eligible for being included with the 202 cows in the last cycle. This increase in eligible cows will cause the heat detection percentage to decrease. By the same logic, this figure will never get better for this group of cows for this date cycle. So, if it is low, it is an early warning that something is possibly wrong and needs to be fixed. Often, if found and fixed early, the decrease in pregnancy rates which are delayed by 2 cycles will be only marginally adversely affected.

In the same manner, looking at the last cycle or two that contain the pregnancy rate percentage is the earliest indication that overall breeding is working or not. Be a little careful of this. Single cycles can vary, sometimes extremely. Note the variation when looking through the chart's line of pregnancy rates.

Date	Ht Elig	Heat	Pct	Pg Elig	Preg	Pct	25	50	75	100
8/22/01	283	204	72	261	50	19	P		H	
9/12/01	362	258	71	357	63	18	P		H	
10/03/01	372	277	74	366	77	21	P		H	
10/24/01	368	224	61	364	62	17	P	H		
11/14/01	266	169	64	260	47	18	P		H	
12/05/01	209	118	56	208	41	20	P	H		
12/26/01	186	124	67	182	44	24	P		H	
1/16/02	170	103	61	166	25	15	P		H	
2/06/02	187	130	70	185	47	25	P		H	
2/27/02	198	130	66	195	40	21	P		H	
3/20/02	227	153	67	227	54	24	P		H	
4/10/02	213	122	57	211	33	16	P	H		
5/01/02	228	151	66	222	38	17	P		H	
5/22/02	212	123	58	209	45	22	P	H		
6/12/02	232	152	66	230	48	21	P		H	
7/03/02	213	112	53	211	42	20	P	H		
7/24/02	227	146	64	0	0	0	Undet	Preg	Stat	
8/14/02	202	156	77	0	0	0	Undet	Preg	Stat	
Total	3926	2550	65	3854	756	20	P		H	

In this dairy, no known changes were made around 1/16/02 that could explain the 15% pregnancy rate as opposed to the 24% and 25% on either side of it. This is a problem of variation that most

of us are use to seeing. Dealing with variation can give false indications of problems. This is a small price to pay to have early warnings of potential problems.

In the last few years, synchronized breeding programs have become popular to use, often with good results. One problem that has come up is some people recommend looking at a short time after breeding has started to determine the effectiveness of the synchronization programs. These programs basically force all breedings of all cows in the first cycle after the voluntary waiting period. The second cycle has none or only a few to breed and in the third all cows are bred that didn't conceive in the first cycle. If only the first three cycles are analyzed for breeding efficiency, the cumulative pregnancy rate reported will be inaccurately high. This is due to the fact that two cycles have breedings and only one has none due to the program. It is only right to look at an even number of cycles to evaluate these programs to balance both the breeding and missed cycles.

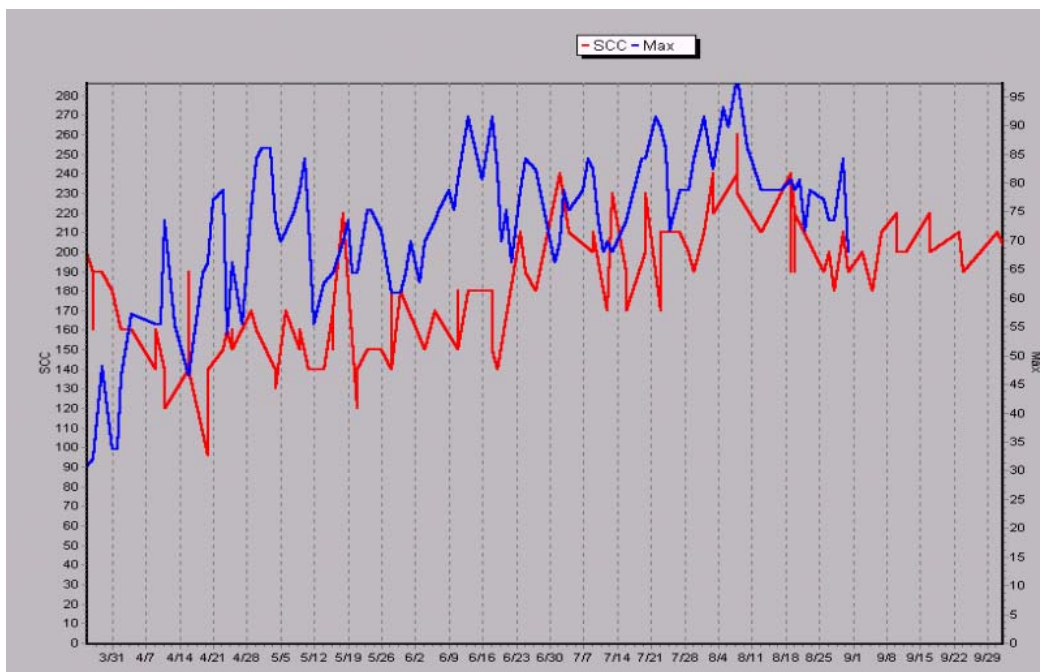
Future Newsletters

We are trying different ways to make our distribution of the newsletter more efficient and easier to use. There is a copy of this newsletter on the CD. It is viewable from there and is one of the features we're adding. By doing this, color can be seen by almost all users. If desired it can be printed and will print in color if one has a color printer and the proper drivers are on the computer. Please let us know your thoughts about newsletter distribution and usefulness. Our goal would be to send everything in digital form in the future.

TankWatch – A Program to Monitor the Milk You Sell

We've been working on a new program that is for the milk processors to provide information about the tank loads of milk back to their shippers. It works in this manner. The processor sends data about each tanker load to a web site where we watch for it and put it into each shipper's data file. This information includes such things as percent fat, protein and solids, and amount of milk. As additional facts are accumulated by the creamery and sent to us, each load's data is updated with the latest available information such as various bacterial counts and SCC. Additionally such things as pickup number, tank number, time of pickup, etc. can be customized and sent to us. We also put the high and low daily temperatures for the zip code of the dairy that is available from the National Weather Service data.

This information then becomes available for the processor's patrons to download using a web based Internet program called TankWatch. The dairyman can graph various parameters, look at tables of the data and store this information into their own computer. In addition, and probably more importantly, the dairyman can set the program up to send alerts when something is out of tolerance in a specific load. He can then be notified by either a FAX, Email or cell phone text message immediately when something has gone wrong. This could, for example, tell him his SCC is above "250,000 on tanker 1234 picked up at 1830, 10/13/2002". These alerts can be set at any level by the dairyman and be sent to anyone the owner wishes to be notified. An example screen follows on the next page.



This is a sample of the SCC (red) and maximum daily temperature (blue) for the past 6 months on a dairy.

FeedWatch Notes

FeedWatch is now working well on just over 100 dairies. It has been late getting to a useable program but now is something we are proud to put out on our clients' farms. No, it is not a "finished program". No program, including Dairy Comp 305, ever is. But it certainly has the features we've dreamed about having and functions well. Communication between the office program and the remote scales is done using radio frequency modems. The communication is done automatically and can be augmented manually when necessary. We can keep track of a great detail of feeding activity including the normal things like time and amounts of feed used, variations from expected, who fed what loads, etc. This can be done both on an "as-fed" and dry matter basis. We can handle weigh-backs as well as possible (DM and ingredients of these are quite variable), feed inventories and feed chemistries (such as protein, fiber, etc). We are working on plans for automatically recording feed deliveries.

For those who purchased the EZFeed program from us in past years, there is a grace time period for converting to FeedWatch. That special conversion price includes reduced prices for a scale and display, no direct charges for the feed watch program and reduced installation charges. This grace period will end in June 1, 2003. After that, purchases of FeedWatch program will be at the standard price for EZFeed customers.