

Dairy Comp 305 Newsletter

Number 23

Fourth Quarter – 2004

2004 has certainly been a different year than the previous one. Jumping from a year of record low prices to one of record high prices makes us all realize we are riding a giant roller coaster in economic terms. As these changes occur, many new aspects arise to try to help even out the hills and valleys of turbulent times. Milking and cheese hedging is occurring at an increasing rate along with existing commodity contracting. Urbanization continues to either force some out of the business and others to move with enough cash to bigger dairies. According to most statistics, cow numbers are remaining about the same but the number of dairies is steadily declining. Almost all new large dairies are being built much more environmentally “friendly”. However, their very size makes them easy targets for political and environmental attacks which frequently find their way into the press.

At Valley Agricultural Software, we have been working on trying to stay abreast of the new hardware that is becoming available, keeping track of the changes we see coming in the near future such as mandatory national animal ID, and making changes to Dairy Comp 305 that will continue to improve its ability to help the dairyman meet their management needs. Specifically, new PDAs are now readily available (Dell Axim as an example) that will connect using either cradles or wireless network technology. We have made changes to DC305 to take advantage of these emerging technologies to make it a more efficient system.

We are putting in more wireless networks on dairies. Not only are these used by Axim but also by remote laptop computers and other devices. For example, we can make a wireless serial connection between the flow computer of a Parlor Watch system and the PC, as well as connections between the computer running DC305 and one running daily milk meters. As these features improve and the hardware and program prices come down, this becomes more affordable each year.

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Changes in EVENTS

During this year we have made many additions to the event section of DC305. This has been pushed by the demands of our users and the needs of such functions as drug usage with protocols. There are 5 major aspects to our additions:

- Setting a “gap” interval, below which duplicate events are recognized only as one
- Allowing grouping of events into categories (such as reproduction or hospital) which allow only these events to be displayed on a list
- Making items that will return the date, DIM or remark of a group of events
- Warning if a cow is SOLD or moved to a milk pen before her beef or milk withdrawal date
- Display the current treatment needed for a cow from a protocol that states the number of treatments to be given (2 or more).

In all cases, these aspects will only work in the Windows version of DC305. All development and enhancements of the DOS program has stopped.

Event Gaps

Event gaps were designed primarily for sickness events (MAST) that also include a treatment associated with them. For example, if one is treating mastitis with “Today” tubes, the MAST event might call and specify that “Today” was going to be used for treating a cow for three days. If, after the treatment, the cow was not better, one might change the treatment to another antibiotic. Using the MAST event again, this treatment would be recorded in the cow’s record. This satisfies the FDA’s requirement of having a diagnosis and treatments associated with a date. However, it also added one more “case” of mastitis to the events of this cow. If one sets the “gap” for MAST to 12, any case of mastitis occurring within 12 days of another will only be considered as one case. This includes when counting the cases of mastitis (often an item XMAST does this), looking at the number of cases in EVENTS Choice 5 (monthly occurrence of events) or graphing events with EGRAPH.

Event Grouping

When making lists, it has always been possible to use the \V switch to have the events from a cow’s record listed along with her listed data. One could also limit this by using \V4 to limit this to the last 4 events. We can now use 6 letters (A..F) to designate events groups. These groups are defined in SETUP > Parameters > DCSETUP.TXT. The parameter for these is EVTA, EVTB, etc. through EVTF. The contents of these are: first, the number of the events to limit in the report (0 is no limit), a list of the event numbers to include separated by commas and a date item to define the earliest date of the event display. For example, EVTA might contain:

4 2,3,5,6,7,12,25 FDAT. This might be considered the “Reproduction event group” which shows the last 4 “reproduction” events – OK, RECK, PREG, OPEN, PREV, ABORT and CYSTIC. (The first 6 events are program defaults, 25 is a user defined event, CYSTIC, in the cowfile this writer used.) This will show the last 4 of these events that have occurred since the cow’s fresh date. If such a list is also wanted for heifers, BDAT (birth date) would be a better date to use than FDAT. In a following section of this newsletter that discusses hospital activities, a hospital list of events is defined and demonstrated.

Adding these letters to the \V switch does present one problem that must be faced. That is that all of the possible letters A – F have functions within the LIST or SHOW command that will be broken if they are used after the \V. For example, LIST ID PEN \VC will not print in compressed print, \VB will not display both live and dead animals and \VD will not display only sold or dead animals. The letter for these must come before the V in the switch (\CV. \BV, \DV, etc.)

Items for Event Group Data

It is possible to use a new event type to combine events into a group or class and then display event data of that class. When defining an event, the display has “grown” as shown:

ALTER9 : Events

Event Name: COMBO44

Prompt for Event Date: ☐

Prompt for Remark: ☐

Update REM item: ☐

Combination Event Set: ☒

Duplicate event gap: 0

Command Content:

OK Cancel

This is the set up for Combo Event #44. The gap information is entered in the window indicated and, in this case, the Combination Event Set is checked. After clicking “OK” another screen is shown that allows one to pick the events for this combination.

ALTER9 : Events

Event Name: COMBO44

Prompt for Event Date: ☐

Prompt for Remark: ☐

Update REM item: ☐

Combination Event Set: ☒

Duplicate event gap: 0

Command Content:

OK

Select Events

<input type="checkbox"/> 1 FRESH	<input type="checkbox"/> 24 SICK
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 OK	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 25 CYSTIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 RECHK	<input type="checkbox"/> 26 3TEAT
<input type="checkbox"/> 4 HEAT	<input type="checkbox"/> 27 SHITS
<input type="checkbox"/> 5 BRED	<input type="checkbox"/> 28 J5VAC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6 PREG	<input type="checkbox"/> 29 BST
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7 OPEN	<input type="checkbox"/> 30 BLOAT
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 8 PREV	<input type="checkbox"/> 31 TERRI
<input type="checkbox"/> 9 MOVE	<input type="checkbox"/> 32 RP
<input type="checkbox"/> 10 BULLPE	<input type="checkbox"/> 33 PENINJ
<input type="checkbox"/> 11 DRY	<input type="checkbox"/> 34 TERRIV
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 12 ABORT	<input type="checkbox"/> 35 MF
<input type="checkbox"/> 13 DNB	<input type="checkbox"/> 36 BADDOE
<input type="checkbox"/> 14 SOLD	<input type="checkbox"/> 37 MISC
<input type="checkbox"/> 15 DIED	<input type="checkbox"/> 38 ALBON

OK

Select All

Clear All

Next, making an item using this event is possible as shown:

```
ALTER2 : Item definitions
Item Definition #177
Name      : DSLRP
Item Type : 72 Days since event
Event Type : COMBO44
Event Num  : -1
Description : Days since last RP event
```

In this case, an item has been made (DSLRP), and item type 72 that uses the COMBO44 created above and will look at the last of the combo 44 events (-1).

Setting up Withdrawal Warnings

Changes have been made to ENTER so that one is warned if an entry is made in a cow's record that violates the milk or meat withdrawal date(s) setup in the latest protocol functions. This is done in ALTER > Choice 7 (Protocols) > Protocol Items as shown:

Item to change	
1	Exit
2	Milk withholding MKDAT
3	Meat withholding BFDAT
4	Treat date/days LTDAT
5	Total treat cost [Undefined]
6	Previous Pen PN
7	Hospital Date HPDAT

If a cow is moved out of the hospital into a MILK pen prior to her MKDAT, DC305 will warn you that it might not be a good idea to do that. (See details of this in "Note" section below.) The warning will look like this:

ENTER	
<input type="button" value="Yes"/>	<div>Warning! MKDAT=9/18/04 Continue with change ?</div> <input type="text"/>
<input type="button" value="No"/>	

In much the same way, if a cow is SOLD prior to her BFDAT, DC305 will warn you that it might not be a good idea to do that. The warning will look like this:

The most unusual feature of these displays is that there is no default (Y or N) in them. One must enter either a “Y” or “N” (or “+” or “-”) to get through this screen.

Note: This function works only if the withdrawal dates are set in the Protocol procedure. If they are not done in this section, the program does not warn a withdrawal violation was entered. For the milk withdrawal function to work, in ALTER (4), the pen types HOSP and MILK must be defined properly. If an animal is moved to a MILK pen with a milk withdrawal date beyond today, it will warn of the potential problem. If she is moved to any other pen type, including a pen with no type definition, this will not happen. If a cow is moved to a HOSP pen even when it is also labeled as a MILK pen, there will be no warning.

Timing issues

In the example above, DC305 looks for withdrawal dates beyond today, not equal to today. This is carried out as follows: If a cow was treated on 10/15 with drug having a 3 day milk withdrawal, the MKDAT will be set to 10/18. On or after this date, the animal’s milk may be shipped. It is worth noting that many short term withdrawal drugs state their withholding time in hours, not days. Thus, if one treated the cow above at 6:00 pm, and the drug withdrawal time is 72 hours, she is not passed her time limit until 6:00 pm of 10/18. If she is shipped and slaughtered on the morning of the 18th, she is in violation by something less than 12 hours. We do not keep track of time of treatments. Using AM and PM (or just A or P) in the remark will help keep this straight.

Hospital List using Protocols in DC305

If one uses Protocols as defined in ALTER (7) as shown in the example below, it is possible to set up hospital lists that will show what animals need to be treated and which are through with their protocol treatment. This is intended to be used when, for example, a cow with mastitis would have an entry such as 9/21/04 MAST PIR.RR. In the partial Protocol table that follows, one sees that Pirsue in this table is to be given for 5 days.

ALTER7 : Protocols										
##	Protocol	Event	Remark	Prompt	Pen	Milk	Meat	Days	Cost	Hide
1	G- LA200	MAST	LAT.	Y	12	4	28	3	0	N
2	G+ PIRSUE	MAST	PIR.	Y	12	1	9	5	0	N
3	TYLAN & PIRSU	MAST	TYP.	Y	12	4	21	3	0	N
4	NAX & FLUSH	METR	NAX	N	6	0	0	4	0	N

When the hospital list was printed on 9/24, the following line appears for this cow:

```
- Dairy Comp 305 ----- No Name Dairy ----- Page 1
- Command : HLIST1
- Expanded: LIST ID PN MKDAT:7 DIH:3 DIM:3 DCC:3 REM:125 FOR PEN=13 \2VHI
-
- NONAME ----- 9/24/04--
  ID  PN  MKDAT DIH DIM DCC REM
=====
  714  13 30Sep04   3   9   0
                                     9/21 MAST   FIR.RR   4/5
```

There are a few things to notice about this list. First, the command has a \VH switch in it. This is used to designate “hospital lists” which will display the current events that are listed in the protocol table that still require the animal to be treated. The extended line has been made to write today’s treatments and notes. The current treatment is a sub-heading of the mastitis event, the remark and what treatment is occurring today (fourth of five). Once this animal is beyond her last treatment, the sub-heading will not show up and she will be listed on the hospital list, showing her milk date so it is known when she can go back into the milk string.

We have written additional information about these procedures and will be happy to send them to those who are interested in setting this up. Of course, one can always call support for help with this also.

Printers

Changes have been made to make DC305 more compatible with printers through the Windows operating system. This includes being able to print in Landscape mode using the \O switch. In the past, we used a setup string, WLNP, to define the lines per page for Windows printing. This is not necessary when using the new program. The actual printing order of paper is changing with newer printers. Printers that put the paper out face-down, have always printed in “logical” order so that when one picks up the stack, the pages are in the correct order. Printers that print face-up typically produce a stack that needs to be resorted. Newer printers that print face-up will often fix this problem by taking in the whole print job and start printing the last page of the report first. Thus these will also be in “logical” order when the job is finished. This feature certainly helps when printing pocket books.

CLEANUP

CLEANUP has a feature that goes through the archive files removing duplicate records. This is done to make those reports that use historical data (BREDSUM, EVENTS, etc) more correct. To run this, type CLEANUP\A. The program will go through COWFILE1.DAT and all archive files (COWFILE1, 2, 3 ... 9) removing any duplicate records it finds. This is done even if the duplicates exist in two different data files. Duplicates are usually caused by mistakes in data entry such as FRESH or SOLD or DIED. When these mistakes are corrected, sometimes duplicate records will be made depending on the methods used and/or needed for the correction. Most of

these differences are determined by how long it takes to find and then correct the mistake. This CLEANUP procedure does a good job of removing duplicates it can find. However, in some cases it is impossible to tell what are duplicate records and, when this happens the suspected record(s) are not removed. Often we will find the program removing tens or hundreds of records the first time this is run. Report accuracy will increase dramatically when this occurs, especially if those duplicates have occurred within the most recent past year.

Archive Records – Using and Saving

Archive records are those of previous lactations and of the animals that have left the herd (SOLD or DIED). These records constitute the “historical data” for a dairy. These records hold little importance for the daily activity and operations of the dairy such as finding the cows to dry or check at the next veterinary visit. Never-the-less, they are needed to make accurate assessments of what has happened on the dairy as when measuring reproductive performance or looking at disease incidence. They are obviously also used to look up an individual cow’s historical data.

Currently, some report functions automatically look at archive records to include at least part of their information. These include BREDSUM, EVENTS, ECON and EGRAPH. Two others, SUM and PCT, can be forced to look in archive also by adding a \L switch to the command. Thus the command `PCT XMAST>0 FOR FDAT>1.1.4\L` will report what percentage of all cows fresh since the first of the year have had at least one case of mastitis.

Three events make archive records, FRESH, SOLD and DIED. The program does this by making a copy of the cows’ records and storing it in the data file (usually COWFILE1.DAT) with a special “flag” that denotes them as being an archive record. When CLEANUP is run, these records are normally moved to the archive file where they are permanently stored. When archive files fill up, they are renamed to a higher number and 9 archive files can exist on the hard disk. During this renaming procedure, COWFILE8.ARC becomes COWFILE9.ARC, 7 becomes 8, etc until COWFILE1.ARC becomes COWFILE2.ARC. A new COWFILE1.ARC is then made to hold the latest archive records from the data file.

In CLEANUP, it is possible to specify the size of the archive file. If possible we recommend having this file be at least large enough to hold one years historical (archive) records. This will usually be about 140% of the adult (LACT>0) herd. Under normal circumstances, CLEANUP should be run about once a month.

To protect these archive files, one needs to make sure they are included in the daily backup procedures. We have developed many different batch files over the years to do this quickly and efficiently and much has been written about the necessity of daily backups over the years. As archive files have increased in importance in the routine reports of DC305, we have tried to include them in this backup procedure. Initially, we only backed up to 5¼ or 3½ inch disks. These would typically hold a zipped (compressed) copy of the DAT file from a 2000 or 3000 milking dairy. However, when archive files are also included (especially more than COWFILE1.ARC) these disks were no longer big enough to hold all the data. This, plus the fact that the current 3½ inch disks are becoming more unreliable, made us change to other media (disks) to hold the daily backups.

Initially we tried using writable CD’s and then ZIP disks became available. CDs were and still are difficult to use because it is impossible to do the whole backup using a batch file. One needs

to go to Windows to finish the job. Zip disks initially held a lot of promise. Starting with 100 megabyte and progressing to 250 and then 750 megabytes, the disks were reliable and could hold all the data necessary to back up DC305 plus much more (such as FeedWatch data). However, with the advent of the 750 mega byte disk drives, we have found the disks failing frequently. The company that makes the most commonly used disk has told us that without going to Windows to eject the disk, they will be corrupted with repeated use. This excludes our batch files from working properly.

We are now recommending memory keys which have various names and plug into a USB port on one's computer. Windows XP, 2000 and Windows ME will recognize these devices immediately. Windows 98 users will need to install drivers for them to work. These will also work with our standard batch files. Currently, there are readily available 256 megabyte keys and recently, 512 megabyte ones have become available at a reasonable price. The prices of these continue to fall but they are more expensive than the Zip disks. Most people are paying between \$45 to \$90 for these, depending on their size and source. As with all backup storage, we recommend using more than one "disk", alternating between them so that if one fails the other should still be good. As always, our support people really appreciate those who call asking to check out their backup procedures before problems arise that demand their use.

Radio Frequency (RF) Identification

RF ID tags are starting to hit the market and be discussed in many circles. These "chips" include circular tags (sometimes called buttons) a little over 1 inch in diameter that are "permanently" placed in the ear and smaller cylindrical ones that are implanted under the skin, usually somewhere on the leg below the hock. The USDA is looking into these also for "permanent" identification of animals. In Western Europe, variations of these are already being placed in or on animals at birth and the governments are tracking all animal movements, from birth to death, using these identification tags. Similar proposals are being made by the USDA, although as of this writing, we are not aware of a set timetable for implementation and no final plan has been announced.

However, part of the system has been finished and various manufacturers are making and selling "chips". Country codes have been assigned. These are either two or three letters or three numbers: US, USA or 840 for this country; DE, DEU or 276 for Germany, etc. Typically these are 12 character numbers plus the country code which make a 14 or 15 character field.

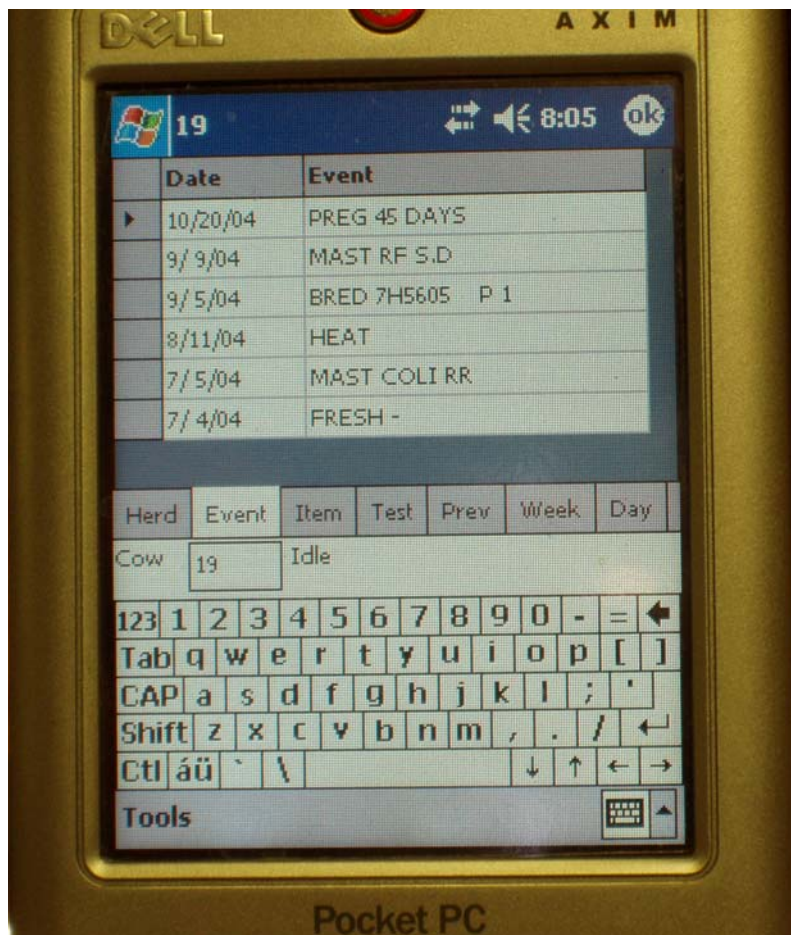
The problem is that there is confusion between the RF ID number and the permanent ID. Many currently being sold do not have country codes in them and have variable number formats. They must be kept in addition to whatever permanent ID is being used. Over the next few years we expect there will be a transition from our current system of USDA tags (with their various formats) or registration numbers to a universal country code number that is also the RF tag. Some of the tags we have seen sold so far, for example, look like a country code tag but in fact are using a manufacture's number in place of the numeric country code. How these are to be handled in the big scheme of things has not been determined.

Implant chips have been on market for years and new hardware developments are now available to make them easier to use. It is this hardware improvement that has caused the increased interest in the whole RF ID technology. American Breeding Service has helped develop a system of animal identification using RF ear tag. Using this program, one can quickly find cows from a list

using a wand antenna to pass by animals in lock-up stanchions. We foresee similar use of implanted chips for identification of animals both when they are locked up and when they are in the parlor. This could greatly help testers identify cows as they are being milked.

Use of “Personal Digital Assistants” (PDAs)

Hand held devices (also called PDAs) have become popular over the last few years. Initially “Palm” devices were used and one with that brand name was an industry leader for a few years. For these we developed an interface that dumps lists to the device so one could essentially have a “herd book” and other work lists on an electronic device. New PDAs have been on the market for over a year now with a different operating system, one that more closely matches Windows. The one we’ve worked with the most is Axim® from Dell which uses the Pocket PC® operating system (from Microsoft). We’ve had very little experience with non-Axim PDAs. They should work fine but we’ve seen model differences with Axim so we cannot guarantee others.



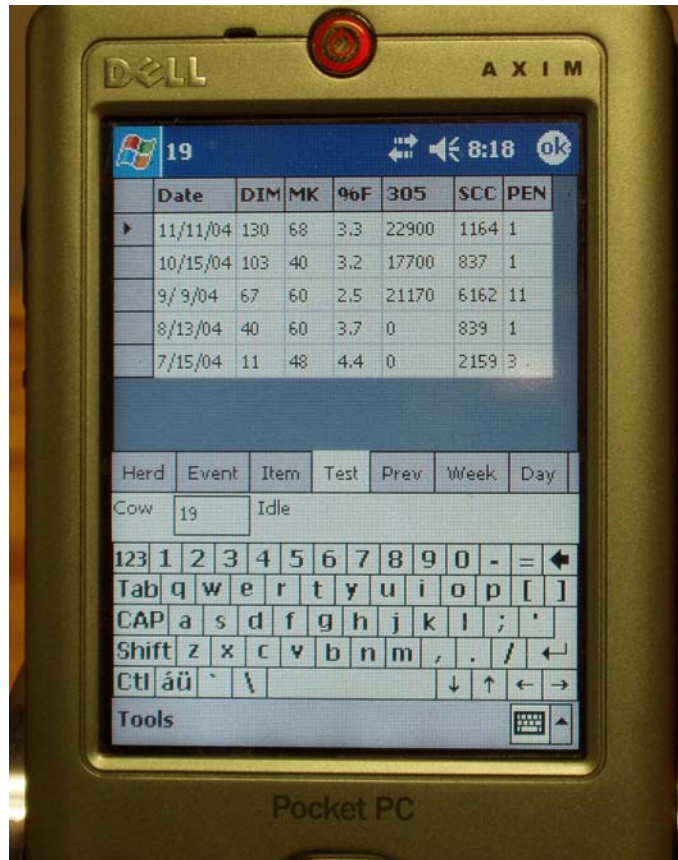
The most used of the programs we’ve written for these devices is the “Cow Card” program (aka: POCKET DC). This downloads all the cow data from the cowfile and displays a “cow card” similar to that in DC305. There are differences. Because the screen is smaller than a PC computer, the data has been rearranged. For example, the events on the main computer are displayed in date order, oldest to latest. In the CowCard program, the order is reversed from the latest to the oldest as shown above.

For this to function, one must have loaded the CowCard program on the Axim® and have Dairy Comp 305 running. Going to “Tools” at the bottom will make another menu which has a choice to “Refresh Herd”. The Axim will then signal DC305 to download the cowfile data. Note: this is only the cowfile that DC305 is currently logged onto. If more than one cowfile is being used, this download needs to be done for each one. The loading process can be done by one of two ways: 1. Using a cradle (or USB connection cable) to transfer data or 2. Have a wireless network to which both the Axim and the PC are hooked up.

Most pages of the cow card are shown, usually with the data in reverse order. The following is an example of page 4, test day data:

We changed some of the headings to make the display appear better in the small screen. As can be seen, the display for test days does not contain all the items that normally come up. RELV and FCM are missing from this page.

The tabs in the middle of the screen show the various displays available. Items will either be the 16 items that are displayed normally on page one, the whole item table that one can scroll through, or you can select any number of items to be displayed up to a limit of 32.



Work lists can be made to go to the Axim also. A simple one using FOR LACT>0 DCC > 215 is shown:



Notice the left hand side of the list. If one taps in the grid next to a cow's number, she will disappear from the list. This list is labeled "To Do". For example if cow 1277 is clicked the following will be displayed:



Notice 1277 does appear in the "Done" list of cows found from the work list.

To get started with the CowCard program all you need is the Dell Axim handheld unit (or other unit that uses the Pocket PC operating system) with the ability to connect to the computer running DC305. The only other need is to be on a current Dairy Comp 305 support plan that includes updates and a subscription plan for the CowCard software. The support team at Valley Ag Software can help you with the prices and support when you are ready.

Miscellaneous Services and Changes

Over the years we've added miscellaneous services we can do to meet the needs of various customers. Many of these take advantage of the Internet and a few are listed below.

Cowfile Maintenance Report (CMR)

With Internet access a customer can schedule Dairy Comp to send a backup to the VAS server via the internet. Generally a customer schedules this to run daily, however, the backup procedure on the VAS server is only being run on Tuesday mornings. This gives the customer piece of mind that their data is safely stored off site. The Valley Ag Software staff will also go through the cowfile once a month. Generally run after test day the customer will be E-mailed a brief summary of things that might need to be changed. Examples are: **1. Cows declared pregnant but missing a conception date.** These animals will not display a "Days Carried Calf" and will not show up on a list of animals to dry thus resulting in the animal freshening in the milking string and missing the dry period. **2. Cows milking more than 90 days and no test date.** Perhaps an animal was sold, died or dried and didn't get reported to DC305.

Our charge for this service is 1 cent per head (Live and archived animals in a 24 month period) with a \$10.00 minimum.

Typical CMR Report

Ref#	Process	Test	Results and Recommendations
1	Check for dup. ID's	Pass	
2	Scan Access Table	Pass	
3	Check Item Count	→	253
4	Check for dup. Items	→	See reference # 4 notes below
5	Map Item Table	Pass	
6	Check Command Count	→	205
7	Purge Sire Table	→	Alter 8 then option 7 will remove 59 sires
8	Clean-up Archives	→	Cleanup\A will remove 9 duplicate archive records
9	Cow Record Checker	→	See reference # 9 below
10	Check STATUS settings	Pass	
11	Check CLEANUP settings	Pass	
12	Current Version	→	December 2003 updates not installed. Not running current version.
13	Check Fresh Table	Pass	

Reference Comments:

#4 DIMFB and FBDIM are the same item and FBDIM is not used in any commands and can be deleted with out harm.

#9 Cow 3334 has a repro of PREG with no CDAT, 9 cows are more than 90 DIM with no test date, 11 cows are pregnant more than 300 days.

Adding Additional Sires to Pick-List when Entering Breedings

There is now an option of having more sires to select from when entering breedings. When entering these, one could always type in the service sire, or you can select the sire from a pick-list. Our current pick-list includes:

1. First Recommended Sire (SIR1)
2. Second Recommended Sire (SIR2)
3. Last Sire (from previous breeding on this specific cow)
4. Bull / Unknown
5. Last Sire used Today

You can now get the BRED event to track additional sires used today. You will see choices from number 6 to 9 fill in as you use various sires. Choice #5 will always be the most recent bull you have used. With the new feature you can get this bull to move progressively down the selection list from #5, to #6, #7, #8, then #9 before he drops off the shortcut pick-list. This option will NOT be the default in your program. If you think you would like to keep the “previous sire” listed longer, you can turn on this feature by going to SETUP>Parameters>click on ADD. The Parameter is **SIRS** and Content is **1**

The screenshot shows a software window with a blue background. At the top, there is a yellow header bar with the text "BRED Event Date". To the left of this bar, a date "6/30/04" is displayed. Below the header, there is a white rectangular box containing a list of options:

- 0 Heat only
- 1 1st sire choice BULL
- 2 2nd sire choice BULL
- 3 Last sire -
- 4 Bull /unknown
- 5 Last sire used Today 9H2575
- 6 Last sire used Today 7H5801
- 7 Last sire used Today 7H8425
- 8 Last sire used Today 7H6155
- 9 Last sire used Today 24H2021

The VAS iLoop

Currently there are four network systems in the US that are cooperatively maintained by VAS and four processing centers. These are used to transmit dairy production information via modems and phone lines. These systems, at Minnesota DHI, Dairy One, Agsource, and AgriTech, currently use older bulletin board system (BBS) technology to log on and transfer files.

The iLoop – “Internet Loop” is a slowly evolving replacement for these BBS Loops. It uses the internet to move the files. Whether the user uses a dialup or broadband connection to the internet does not matter.

There are several reasons to move towards the iLoop:

- The current BBS Loop system is obsolete. It does not support additional development.
- Many users are able to connect to the internet fine, but have problems using CONNECT. iLoop uses more reliable file transfer methods.
- Many new computers do not even have modems; instead they have network cards for internet access.
- In the current BBS system consultants need separate logons for each processing center, but the iLoop allows access to multiple processing centers.
- Most importantly, users with broadband access to the internet are able to send and receive files at considerably faster speeds.

There is little apparent difference to the user who is already downloading from the BBS loops. The user has a username and password as before, plus a list of herds to be accessed. The iLoop web page is used to configure a user's access. We have access levels for onfarms (mainly RECEIVE), consultants, and FTECH users.

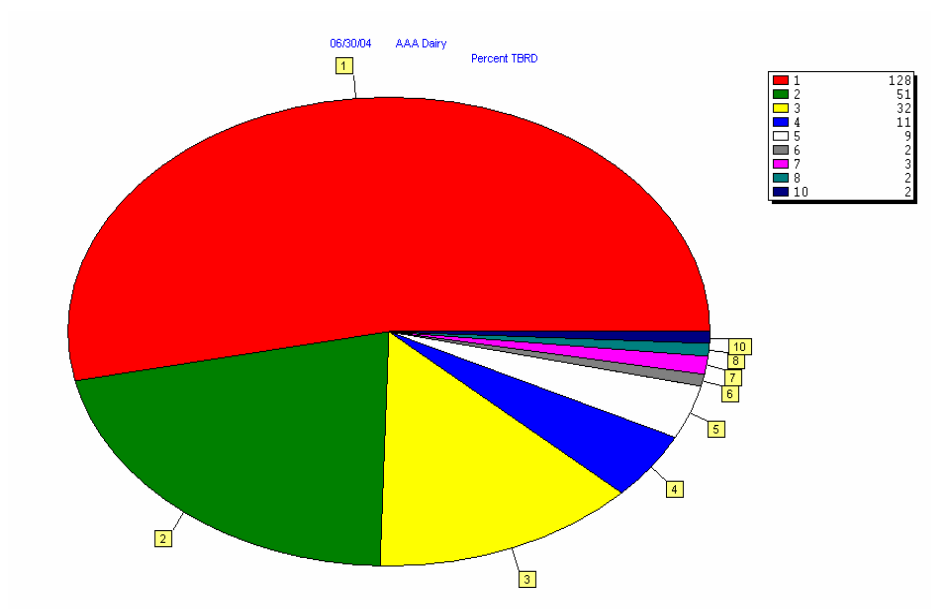
We are in the process of populating the iLoop with all of the herds from Minnesota, AgSource, and Dairy One. Already as of late November we have over 8000 herds, and the iLoop is expected to be loaded with every herd from these three processing centers by the end of 2004. In early 2005, we hope to allow iLoop access (both onfarm and consultant access) to the ATA herds as well, and later in 2005, we may add the Canadian herds.

VAS itself also has iLoop access to allow access to users and cowfiles not represented by these four DHIs. All users (even those not on any DHI) can upload cowfiles to VAS for support and for backup purposes. We also offer a cowfile analysis option to check for problems with your data you may not even be aware of. See the CMR section of this newsletter.

The program updates being sent out in fall of 2004 are fully ready for iLoop use. They also will support iLoop downloads and uploads for ATA herds, although the ATA iLoop system is not yet ready. Call your DHI or VAS support person if you are interested in converting to the iLoop.

SUM Command default to Graph

One use of the SUM command is to take a group of cows, and break it down into smaller groups to check distribution. For example, a command to look at all current pregnant animals, grouped by their number of times bred would be SUM BY TBRD FOR CDAT>0. Once this command is run, you will get a table with the data. To view a graph of this table, you can click the GRAPH tab, toward the bottom of the screen, or if you would like a SUM command to default to the graphical display, the \G switch added to the end of the command will do this for you.



International Regional Settings

DC305 now looks at the Windows Regional settings to determine some punctuation uses of the program. For those in the USA, there will be no difference. For those in other parts of the world some changes could occur. The most common change that will be noticed is the change in function of the “.” and the “,”. In Europe and many other parts of the world, the comma is used to denote a decimal. Percent fat is written 3,6 for example. The period is used to group or separate large numbers. For example, what is written in the USA as 12,582 would be written 12.182 in Europe. These settings are taken from the Regional settings which can be seen in Windows Control Panel.

In addition to the display differences, there are ENTER differences that we now accommodate. In computers with a 10-key number keypad on the right side of the keyboard, by that keypad there is a period (.) key. In international settings, when using the number keypad to enter a decimal number, that key becomes the decimal separator or a comma (,). We still allow this key to be the “breed” letter of a NAAB code (the “H” in 100H1234) and with these regional setting, whatever punctuation is used for a decimal separator becomes the “breed letter” in sire NAAB codes.

The last thing this affects is certain FILEIN and FILEOUT procedures. The \C switch used to denote a comma separated file will use whatever the regional settings say. In most European computers, this is semi-colon (;).

To change these settings and force them to be like the USA despite the regional settings, a setup string needs to be in place. SEPS is the parameter and “.” will causing a period as the decimal separator and a comma as a string separator. If an international user is reading in a comma file from the USA and temporarily needs to convert to US format, add a \U to the FILEIN command.

Remark Entries

For those who like to structure remarks and limit what can be entered, the following is an example of allowing only 3 choices for a REM:

```
ENTER EC=32 REM=PEN3DYS;PEN&DMZ;NOTREAT\
```

Only the choices listed (in this case 3 of them) separated by “;” will be allowed. The user can use the mouse or arrow key to make a selection.

ALTER

In a few instances, users want to limit certain portions of the DC305 program to certain users. We can now put passwords on the ALTER command so only those who know the password will be able to get into it. If anyone has a need for this feature, call support for instructions on setting this up.

BREDSUM – Conception rates

In some instances, users want to see the conception rates on bulls or breeders. Often many sires are used so little that their presence on the list is a distraction. Look at the following list as an example:

Sire Name	%Conc	#Preg	#Open	Other	Abort	Total	%Tot	SPC
7B706	33	2	4	0	0	6	0	3.0
73726	100	1	0	0	0	1	0	1.0
7B745	100	1	0	0	0	1	0	1.0
6H754	15	3	17	0	1	20	0	6.7
9H2517	14	1	6	0	0	7	0	7.0
9H2633	28	48	118	5	3	171	3	3.5
9H2646	28	36	89	10	0	135	2	3.5
9H2655	28	50	128	11	9	189	3	3.6
9H2722	13	5	32	2	0	39	1	7.4
9H2757	17	5	24	2	0	31	1	5.8
7H5099	34	13	25	3	2	41	1	2.9
7H5181	20	1	4	0	0	5	0	5.0
7H5211	40	4	6	0	0	10	0	2.5
7H5217	50	2	2	0	0	4	0	2.0

Notice that no sire has been used more than 3% of the time and most of the numbers are pretty small. As an example, using the command BREDSUM\S5 will have the program look only at sires that have been used more for than 5% of the total breedings.

Sire Name	%Conc	#Preg	#Open	Other	Abort	Total	%Tot	SPC
7H5742	26	93	256	25	5	374	6	3.8
7H5801	30	164	374	54	20	592	10	3.3
7H6080	29	128	306	25	12	459	8	3.4
7H6155	31	174	382	46	16	602	10	3.2
7H6427	24	85	263	72	9	420	7	4.1
OTHERS	27	897	2382	375	85	3654	60	3.7
TOTALS	27	1541	3963	597	147	6101	100	3.6

Sending Heifer Information to ATA

In the last few years some of the bull studs have wanted to get data of the young daughters of their bulls to estimate how many will be coming fresh in the future. We have now added an option to SEND to have this data transmitted to ATA. They will then send this on to the studs requesting heifer information. This is done with the command SEND\Y. It can be scheduled to run automatically if desired. Contact us and/or ATA for help if it is needed.

This procedure sends the current status of all heifers. Thus, as they are given permanent IDs, leave the herd, are bred and found pregnant, it will all be sent. If heifers have their ID changed to an “adult” number before they come fresh, this will be sent also.

“All heifers” also includes any that have been forgotten. Thus, if one forgets to enter DIED into a calf’s record, she could stay in the file for a long time. It might be best to check the heifer records and, looking at such things AGE, DCC and DSLH, making sure the data to be sent is of animals that really exist. It would also be good to make sure such information as BDAT, REG (or USDA) and SID is correct.