

Dairy Comp 305 Newsletter

Fourth Quarter – 2008

Number 27

As 2008 draws to a close it will certainly be remembered as one of the more tumultuous years in the dairy industry. Unfortunately, there is no guarantee it will not look tame when looking back on it in the future. Recent articles in major newspapers clearly reveal that we are part of a worldwide global economy. It is also apparent that the US is responsible for at least some of the disruption of banking and investment markets, not only on Wall Street but throughout the world. It will be interesting to see how all of this plays out and how agricultural in general and the dairy industry in particular will fare in the coming times.

There are potential changes coming to VAS also. This year at World Dairy Expo in October, we made an announcement that Koepon Holdings of Holland was planning on buying some of the shares of our company. Koepon Holding also owns Alta Genetics. As of this writing (late October 2008), we are still working on finalizing the details of their investment in VAS. It is assumed that the process will be completed in a few months and all the details will then be known. None-the-less, there are some details that are currently clear. The following is condensed and paraphrased from a letter sent to Alta Genetics' employees with VAS's full agreement:

- Koepon Holding wants VAS to remain a separate entity with its own existing management team. It is to be a sister company to Alta Genetics, not owned by Alta Genetics.
- The Koepon Holding strategy is to create value and improve herd profitability for progressive clients globally via a family of companies that offer superior genetic and reproductive improvement, animal nutrition, and management services. The team at VAS along with its software management programs and services will accelerate the execution of this business strategy.
- Alta management will cooperate with VAS to develop a marketing and service alliance that creates additional value for progressive dairy producers globally. The two companies will focus on creating a strong working relationship between Alta's sales consultant network and the service, knowledge and expertise offered by VAS.
- Koepon recognizes that VAS has developed many extensive and long-term business relationships with clients, both in North American and world-wide global markets. These relationships include business dealings with direct competitors to Alta, as well with dairy producers who are not Alta clients. Koepon fully expects VAS to continue to grow and develop its business dealings with these existing and future clients.

It is our feeling that VAS has two major assets: our employees and our clients. It is our desire to be able to maintain and improve our company to be able to provide the best software, service and support possible to our clients and maintain and expand our staff to provide this wherever our products are being used. While the majority of our revenue comes from North America, it is evident worldwide markets are developing. We are trying to take part in that while continuing to improve our existing programs and develop new ones to help dairymen face the future.

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New Version 7 Cowfile

A new version of the cowfile has been developed that is primarily for use on heifer ranches. The impetus for its development has been the use of RFIDs and the fact that it is best if all the animals are held in one cowfile when this technology is being used. While there are several changes to this cowfile, the main one is that the ID is now being held in twice the space as in the regular cowfiles. In this configuration we can hold very large ID numbers. With this large ID we’ve developed what we call a “dotID” numbering system. With this we assign the first part of the animal’s ID as the source farm and the last part is her actual ear tag ID number. Thus we can have two (or more) animals with the same ear tag number. For example, there could be a 2.2683 and a 4.2683 in the computer at the heifer ranch; one from source farm #2 and one from source farm #4.

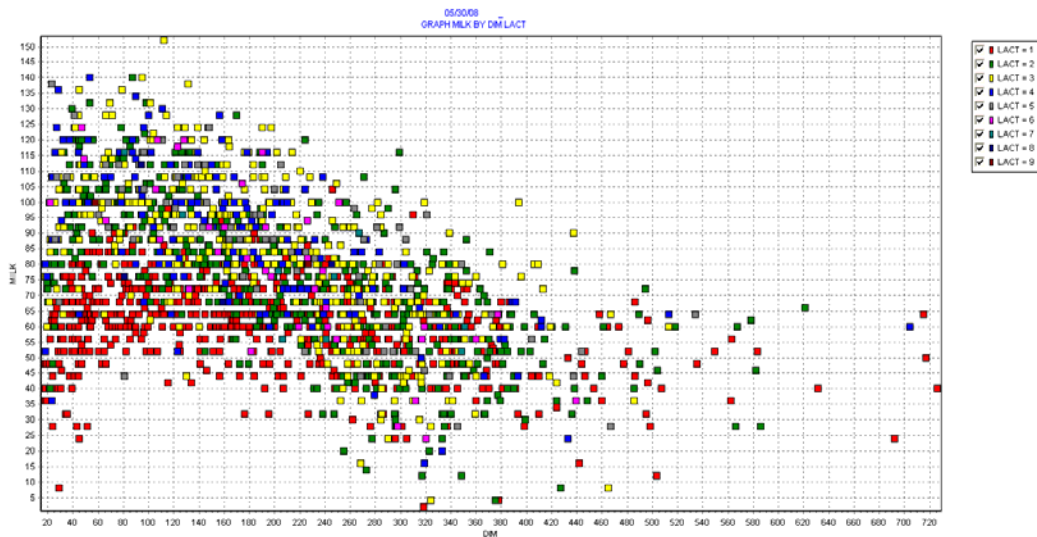
Using this plus the internet and scheduled tasks, we are now able to send activity about the heifers back to the dairy from whence they came. Thus the dairyman can follow their heifers’ progress and breedings at the heifer ranch and this data can be included in the dairy’s projections such in ECON\I.

The downside to this development is that we need to use more bytes for stored items due to the larger ID numbers not just for ID but for other numbers that reference ID such as CALF1, OLDID, DID, etc. All-in-all, it will add at least 14 bytes to the cowfile stored items spaced needed. We are not currently recommending this cowfile for general dairy use. The dairy can still use their current cowfile to exchange data with a heifer ranch using a V7 cowfile. Many of the DHIA processing centers cannot handle large ID numbers and therefore this could cause problems for them if misused. Lastly, true large ID numbers in an animal’s ear are really difficult to see and easily produce confusion unless everything is done with RFID scanning. In that vein, we have one heifer client that has no ear tags and just uses RFID to identify each animal. But again, there are no long numbers that need to be seen or memorized in this case. If they are not scanned, they are not known. And this facility has good lockup stanchions everywhere.

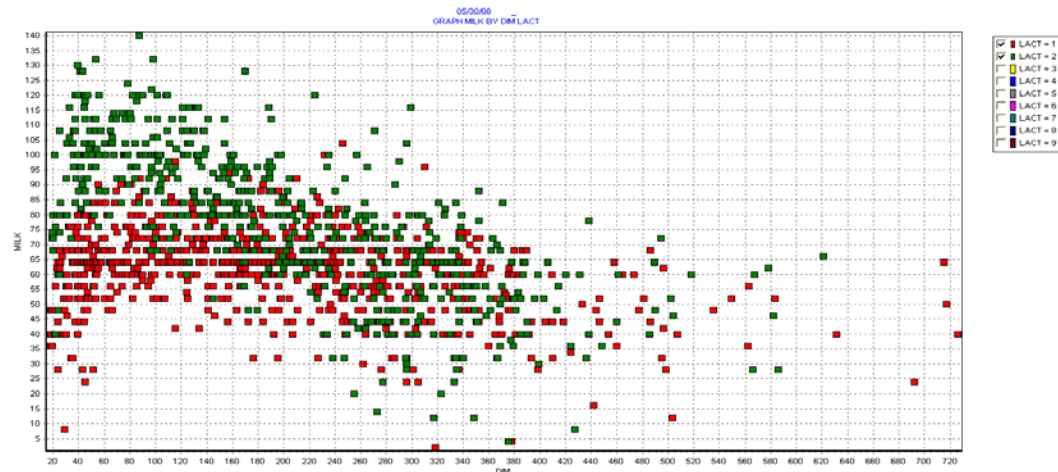
Graphing Enhancements

Changes have been added to most graphing functions to enhance their usefulness. These include the ability to remove and add series data in a graph, auto adjust the graph as changes are made to fit the new page and display additional information when the mouse is moved over interesting data in some graphs. In addition new graphs or features have been added for analyzing breedings, health events, and SCC.

Notice in the following graph made with the command GRAPH MILK BY DIM LACT that in the familiar box in the upper right corner some small check boxes have been added. In this case the “series” for the graph is LACT and removing the check marks from specific lactation will remove their data from the graph.



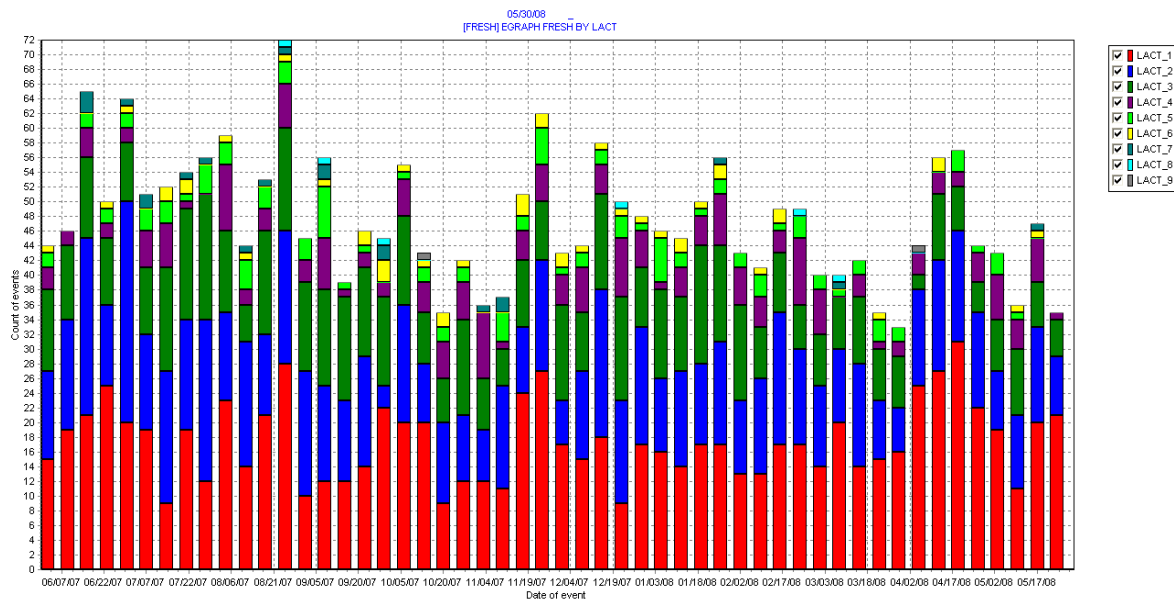
Removing all but the first two check marks makes the following graph:



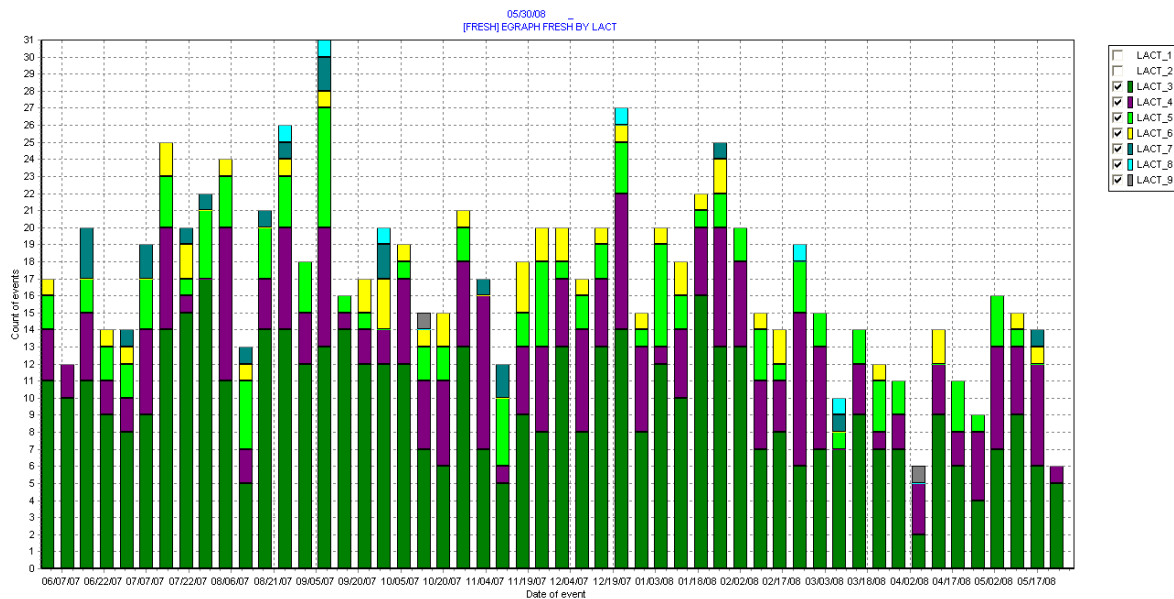
This procedure is available in all graphs that show the checked series on the right hand side.

In many cases when bar graphs are made using multiple series, when a specific series is removed, the graph will re-adjust itself to fit the available space on the screen.

EGRAPH FRESH BY LACT

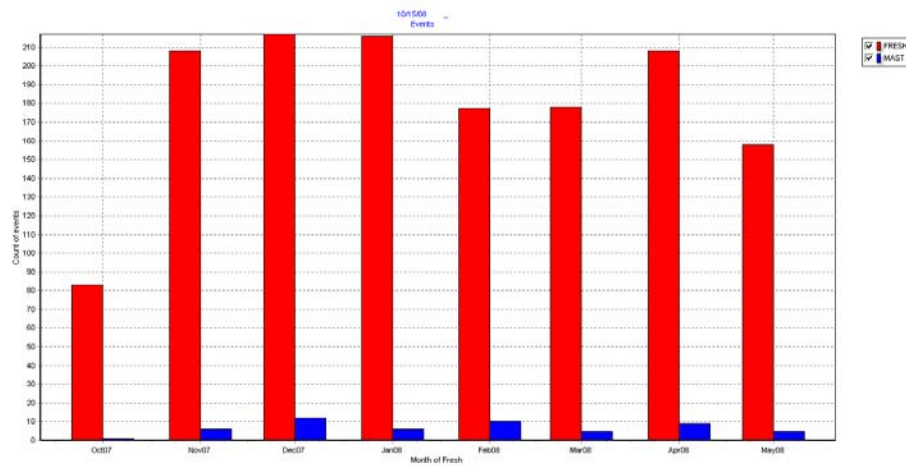


The same graph looking at only “adult” cows (LACT>2):

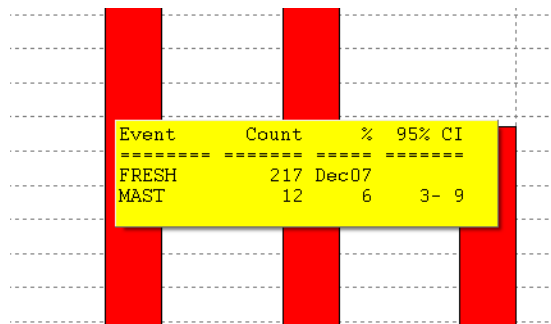


In graphs produces by BREDSUM, EGRAPH and SUM that involve percentages, if one holds the mouse over the bar representing a group of animals, the percentage is listed along with the raw numbers and the

95% confidence levels. For example the command EGRAPH MAST FRESH FOR DIM<31\FN1 will make the following graph:



If one floats their mouse over the third red or blue bar, the following sub-display label will appear:



The label tell us that there were 217 fresh cows in Dec. of '07 and 12 had mastitis in the first 30 days of lactation. This represents 6% of the cows and statistically this percentage would fall between 3% and 9% percent 19 out of every 20 times.

Additional graphs will be demonstrated for BREDSUM, SUM, PLOT and EGRAPH in this newsletter under their respective sections.

SCC Monitoring

One small but much used addition in SCC analysis has been made to the ECON command. ECON\S runs the bulk tank SCC report. Adding a P to the switch (ECON\SP) makes a prompt screen to pick previous test dates on which to run this same bulk tank report. This makes it easy to compare this report over various time intervals.

Select Date

1	10/11/2007
2	11/16/2007
3	12/13/2007
4	1/11/2008
5	2/14/2008
6	3/14/2008
7	4/10/2008
8	5/16/2008

The SUM command has been commonly used to make a 4 square diagram of somatic cells by the command: SUM SCC=200 PSCC=200 FOR SCC>0 PSCC>0:

	PSCC <200	PSCC ≥200	
SCC ≥200	120 7%	171 10%	291 17%
SCC <200	1361 79%	81 5%	1442 84%
	1481 86%	252 15%	1733 100%

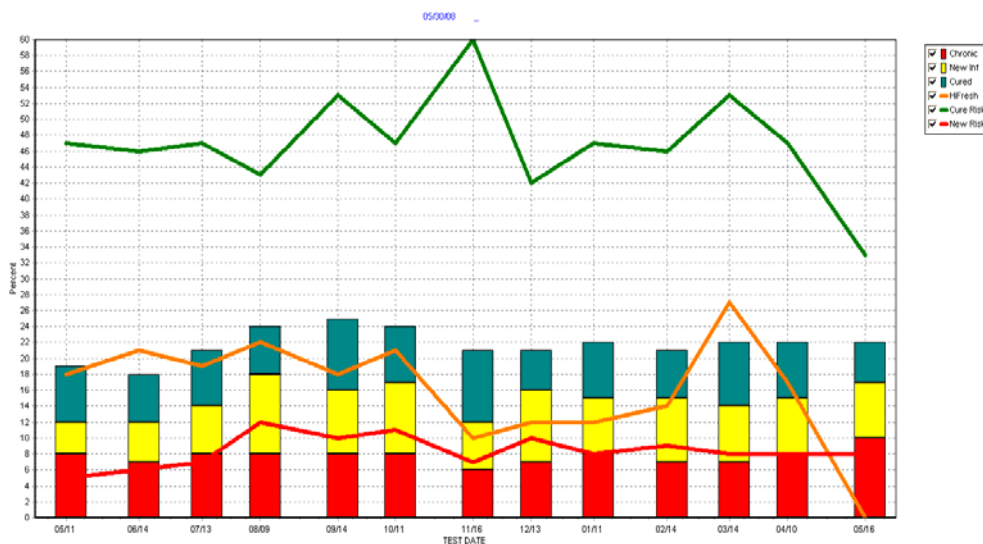
This shows the change in SCC based on 200 being an “infected” cut-off point. 1361 cows had an SCC of less than 200 both the current and the previous test, 81 have a low SCC now that were high previously, 171 were high the last two tests and 120 are high currently who were low previously. This type of breakdown was helpful in looking at SCC trends on the dairy. The disadvantage of this method is that one is only looking at the last test date and only compares the current SCC with the previous one, thereby omitting the fresh cows.

Several years ago a table had been developed to greatly expand this concept and make it more useful. The PLOT command has further been changed to extend this way of looking at SCC for the last year’s test dates. PLOT SCC=200 BY SCC \RZY will make the following table and graph:

	T E S T D A T E S												
	511	614	713	8 9	914	1011	1116	1213	111	214	314	410	516
PSCC													
Chronic %	8	7	8	8	8	8	6	7	8	7	7	8	10
#	35	32	40	49	53	67	58	73	93	94	106	121	163
New Inf %	4	5	6	10	8	9	6	9	7	8	7	7	7
#	16	24	31	56	50	70	51	95	84	109	99	111	113
Cured %	7	6	7	6	9	7	9	5	7	6	8	7	5
#	31	26	33	37	61	59	86	50	88	82	115	116	78
Clean %	80	82	79	76	75	76	79	79	78	78	78	78	79
#	337	364	393	444	500	617	712	841	915	1020	1147	1256	1321
HiFresh %	18	21	19	22	18	21	10	12	12	14	27	17	
#	11	22	25	30	38	29	20	21	23	27	47	21	
LoFresh %	82	79	81	78	82	79	90	88	88	86	73	83	
#	50	83	109	105	169	112	171	156	173	173	125	106	
Cure Risk	46	46	46	42	52	46	60	41	46	46	53	46	33
New Risk	4	5	7	11	9	10	7	10	8	9	8	8	8

The first four lines refer to the same “quadrants” descriptions discussed in the SUM command above. The last two lines are in reference to the fresh cows. Thus in the 5/11 test, 82% of the fresh cows (50 animals) had an SCC of less than 200 and 18% (11 animals). This command can be run using FOR to look at sub-groups of the herd such as LACT=1 or LACT>1. Lactation groups and other parameters can also be accessed via the Options button in PLOT.

Along with the table comes the following graph.



The legend for this graph defines the bars in the first three colors and the lines in the last three. The denominator of the bars is the total animals with both a previous and a current SCC. The numerators are defined as:

Chronic = Hi Prev SCC; Hi Cur SCC

New Inf = Lo Prev SCC; Cur Hi SCC

Cured = Hi Prev SCC; Lo Cur SCC

HiFresh is the percent of fresh cows (first test) that are Hi divided by the total number of fresh animals for that testdate.

Cure Risk is the percentage of total cures this test divided by total chronic and new infections last test.

New Risk is the total new infected divided by the total lo SCC previous test.

In both of these Risk calculations the animals must be present and have a recorded SCC on both tests.

In this graph the “clean” cows (Lo Prev SCC; Lo Cur SCC) are not graphed but represent the space from the top of the bar to 100%. Using this table and graph should help improve SCC evaluations. Fresh animals are included and one can see trends that are occurring over the year.

BREDSUM – Review of changes and additions

A cutoff window has been added to the conception BREDSUM options window. This will set a minimum percent of total breeding be analyzed.

Compare the two tables below. The second one had a 5 put in as the cutoff.

Technician	%Conc	#Preg	#Open	Other	Abort	Total	%Tot	SPC
=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====
Vicente	51	115	112	0	4	227	7	2.0
Alberto	50	60	61	4	1	125	4	2.0
Ari	32	13	28	0	3	41	1	3.2
Bernat	18	2	9	0	0	11	0	5.5
Daniel	59	13	9	0	7	22	1	1.7
Carolina	50	915	927	21	25	1863	54	2.0
Agusthn	50	553	556	12	18	1121	33	2.0
Roberto	57	12	9	2	0	23	1	1.8
OTHERS	100	1	0	0	0	1	0	1.0
TOTALS	50	1684	1711	39	58	3434	100	2.0

69 non-AI breedings were omitted

Notice that all breeders who have 5% or less of the total breedings are grouped together into the “other” row. This table then represents only significant breedings.

Technician	%Conc	#Preg	#Open	Other	Abort	Total	%Tot	SPC
=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====
Vicente	51	115	112	0	4	227	7	2.0
Carolina	50	915	927	21	25	1863	54	2.0
Agusthn	50	553	556	12	18	1121	33	2.0
OTHERS	47	101	116	6	11	223	6	2.1
TOTALS	50	1684	1711	39	58	3434	100	2.0

69 non-AI breedings were omitted

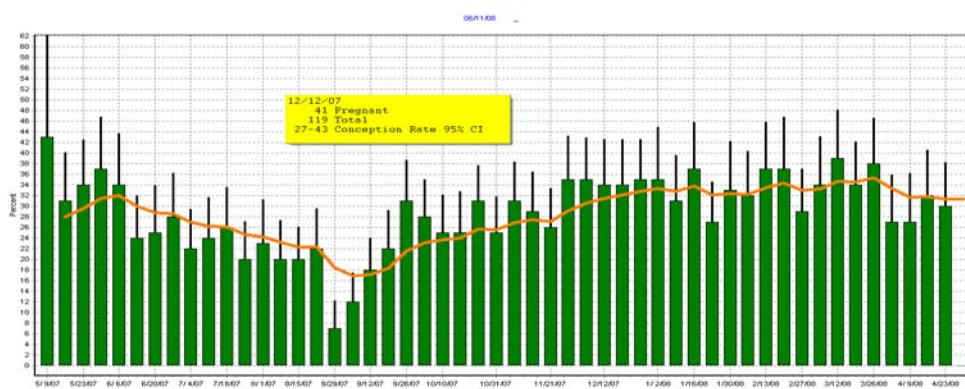
Similar additions have been made to the two parameter BREDSUM (\X) reports. This example is BRED-SUM\XTO.

95% CI	Total	E.C.	F.C.	E.S.	M.M.	J.M.	A.O.	A.M.
=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====
TIMED OFFSINC	20-23	19-24	20-26	-	21-26	18-33	15-21	18-24
NORMAL HEAT	28-29	28-32	30-34	17-31	25-29	26-30	26-29	26-29
Undef Code 8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
OTHERS	17-27	-	-	-	-	-	-	19-39
TOTALS	27-28	27-29	29-32	16-28	24-27	26-30	25-28	25-28
Percent								
TIMED OFFSINC	21	22	23		24	25	18	21
NORMAL HEAT	28	30	32	23	27	28	28	27
Undef Code 8								
OTHERS	22							28
TOTALS	27	28	30	22	26	28	26	26
Count								
TIMED OFFSINC	4764	973	751	38	1012	129	707	781
NORMAL HEAT	21573	2999	3486	129	2618	2009	4134	2937
Undef Code 8	28						28	
OTHERS	278	25	38		7	26	46	82
TOTALS	26643	3997	4275	167	3637	2164	4915	3800
Pregnant								
TIMED OFFSINC	1020	211	172	6	238	32	128	165
NORMAL HEAT	6125	903	1115	30	702	563	1150	806
Undef Code 8	7						7	
OTHERS	61	6	8			7	9	23
TOTALS	7213	1120	1295	36	940	602	1294	994

Notice that in this report the number of pregnant animals for each category has been added. Also, when the COUNT section has less than 50 breedings with a known outcome for any category, there is no average or 95% confidence intervals (CI) calculated for it. We no longer make these calculations when the number of breedings is so low due to the variability of the results. We don't want these highly variable calculations to be misused.

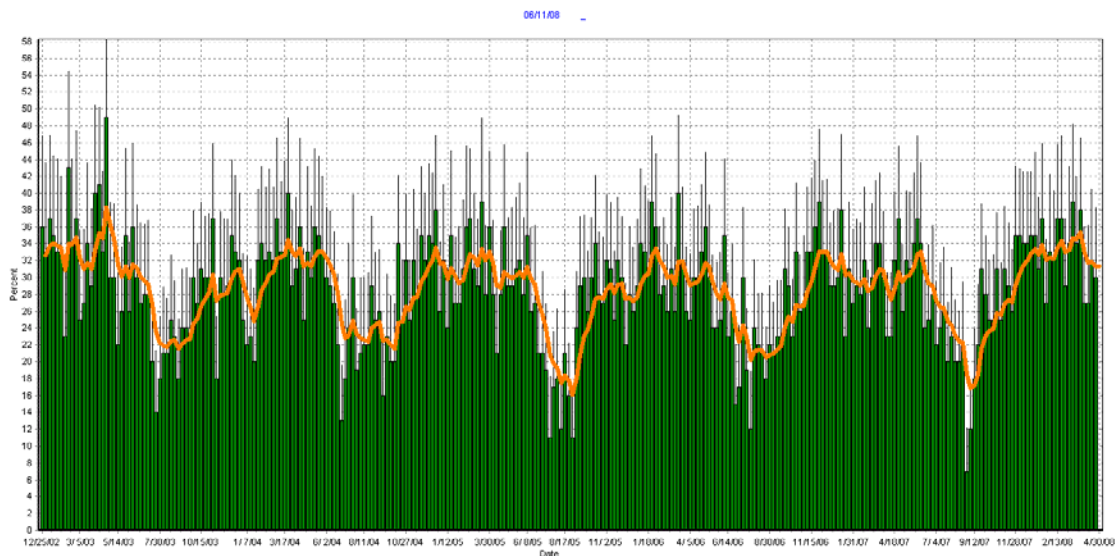
BREDSUM\R

This command will produce a graph of the weekly conception rates on the dairy for the past year. The default dates can be changed by adding a \D switch. While this feature has been available a few years, this year we added a trend line:

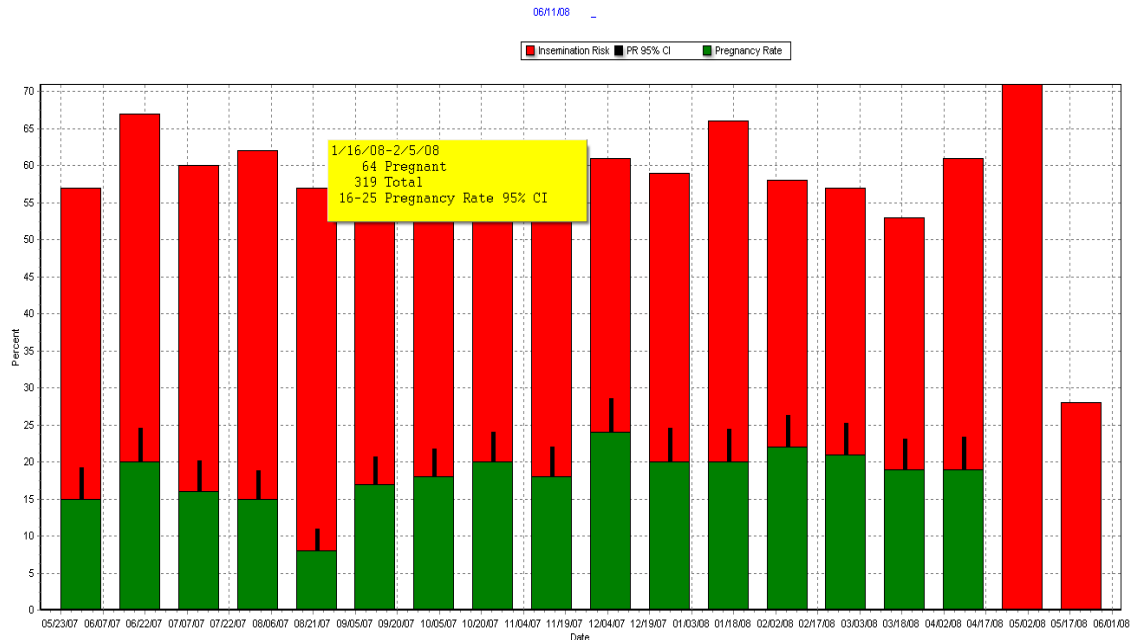


One can also see that the floating mouse feature is available in this graph.

This graph can also be run for a longer period of time by adding the \D switch. The following graph shows the annual conception rates and their annual change over the last 5 years:



The standard Pregnancy Rate Graph with a floating mouse window show the detail of the description for the 21 day period of 1/16/08 to 2/ 5/08:



One must have the mouse in the green part of the graph to make this happen. Holding the mouse in the red part that represents heat detection does not produce a similar detail window.

ALTER

There has been a change in ALTER's "look and feel" with a more "Windows like" look to it. The mouse can be used more and several reports are dumped out to Windows "Notepad" automatically. In the commands section there is a new option of testing commands (or run ALTER \3T). This option will run through all the commands and find errors such as abbreviations that don't run any more or those that might be mistyped. When command tables get too full and need to be cleaned up, this is one additional tool we now have to help with the job.

Item type 130 returns the month and year of date and is started to get a lot more use, especially with GUIDE. An example of how it might be used is to make an item with the Item name YMFSH, type 130, Op1 FDAT. It will return Nov07 for any animal with a fresh date of November of 2007. Although the value looks like a string (row of characters) internally it is a number that can be used for sorting with BY.

Changes in handling pens & Protocols

As dairies get more sophisticated and the drug treatments are being increasingly scrutinized the management of moving cows from one pen to another becomes more and more critical. This year a change was made so that if a "previous pen" was defined in Alter > Protocols, any time an animal is moved from one pen to another the previous pen is set to the pen from which the cow was moved. This occurs if the MOVE event is used to move her or one simply types PEN={new pen}.

Along the same lines, if a cow is moved from to or from a defined hospital pen and protocol hospital items are defined (such a hospital date, days in hospital, total hospital days, etc.) ,the items are set as they should be as it was formerly handled by commands. In almost all cases this will make record keeping easier. The one exception is if an animal is mistakenly moved into a wrong pen (either in or out of a hospital pen) one must fix these items appropriately manually. Contact support if this becomes a problem and get help fixing and understanding what happens in these cases.

And while talking of hospital activity, if Protocols are setup with milk and beef withdrawal dates, the events and the dates will be colored to warn if they are being breached. RED is for milk withdrawal date has not been reached and YELLOW is if the beef date has not been reached. As stated in a newsletter some time ago, warning will occur when animals are moved out of a hospital pen into a milk pen before the milk withdrawal date and likewise are sold before the beef date.

Face changes within various DC305 commands

Other face lifting has happened in SETUP, CLEANUP, VENTER and Event Entries. In SETUP more tabs have been added to reflect the increasing use of some of that command's functions. LOGON has its own tab and has added a default starting cowfile. This is helpful when infrequently someone logs onto a different cowfile and the program would continue to log onto it afterwards. Activity logs will default to being kept for 30 days. This is to help support as much as possible.

CLEANUP now has a second tab that will allow one to see data about all the archive files.

CLEANUP : F:\HERDS\ART\COWFILE1.DAT

Last CLEANUP	5/26/08	Run CLEANUP	
Total Records	6840	To Be Deleted	0
Active	5592	May Be Archived	10
Inactive	113	Available (Free)	1125
		Clean Archive Files	
		Exit	

Settings Arc Files

DAT/	4/5	Total	Free	Minimum	Maximum
ARC	Ver	Type	Records	Records	AR DAT AR DAT
1DAT	5	33	33	6840	1125
1ARC	5	33	33	2500	849 11/21/07 5/26/08
2ARC	5	33	33	2500	18 3/ 9/07 11/27/07
3ARC	5	33	33	2500	4 6/21/06 3/ 9/07
4ARC	5	33	33	2500	1 8/25/05 6/21/06
5ARC	5	33	33	2500	42 10/18/04 8/25/05
6ARC	5	33	33	2500	30 4/11/04 11/18/04
7ARC	5	33	33	2500	0 6/25/03 8/ 7/04
8ARC	5	33	33	2500	0 7/16/02 6/25/03
9ARC	5	33	33	2500	30 8/20/01 7/18/02

In this set of files, one can see the size of each archive, the number of free records in each and their archive date range. The few free records are usually a result of running the “Clean Archive Files” routine at some time and the program found a few duplicate archive records. One can also see that cowfile1.arc, the one currently being used, has space for something over 800 more records.

A handy feature is in CHKFILE that will find the record of all animals with a given number.

ID	File	B DAT	AR DAT	REG	USDA	LACT	RPRO	Arc	RecNum
=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====
25	COWFILE1.DAT	11/25/05	-	-	73XZY8879	1	PREG		425
25	COWFILE2.ARC	4/29/03	6/27/07	-	73XYK4063	2	DRY		1380
25	COWFILE2.ARC	4/29/03	7/ 9/07	-	73XYK4063	3	SLD/DIE		1507
25	COWFILE2.ARC	11/25/05	9/23/07	-	73XZY8879	0	PREG		2317
25	COWFILE4.ARC	4/29/03	4/13/06	-	73XYK4063	1	DRY		2349
25	COWFILE5.ARC	6/ 7/00	1/10/05	-	42AQV8387	3	SLD/DIE		973
25	COWFILE5.ARC	4/29/03	4/18/05	-	73XYK4063	0	PREG		1730
25	COWFILE6.ARC	6/ 7/00	6/ 6/04	-	42AQV8387	2	DRY		810
25	COWFILE8.ARC	6/ 7/00	7/20/02	-	42AQV8387	0	PREG		408
25	COWFILE8.ARC	6/ 7/00	6/20/03	-	42AQV8387	1	DRY		2855
25	COWFILE9.ARC	7/ 1/99	9/ 1/01	-	35SEJ5987	1	SLD/DIE		545
25	COWFILE9.ARC	11/27/99	12/12/01	-	91JUB8459	0	PREG		1281
25	COWFILE9.ARC	11/27/99	5/20/02	-	91JUB8459	1	SLD/DIE		2402

This dairy re-uses ID numbers. It is easy to see the location of records using this system and one can even trace an animal’s existence in the dairy.

Vet. Enter and Event Entries

VETENT (VENTER) has been expanded to fill the full screen.

ID	Result
11	[Skip]

ID : 203 VETC : PREG RELV : 86 RPRO : BRED PEN : 3 PRVME : 28830 305ME : 23540 DSLH : 47	1 Skipped 2 Recheck 3 OK 4 Open 5 Pregnant, Correct Date 6 Pregnant, Other Date 7 Abort 8 Other Event 9 Exam/change this cow R Review Entries D Define Function Keys J Jump to another cow	{F1 } {F2 } {F3 } {F4 } {F5 } 3CLRO+8=29LUT {F6 } 3C1R {F7 } 2RX {F8 } 3NSO {F9 } TESTING {F10} S=198SYMCRO {F11} LUT {F12} 4KRIS
---	---	--

Date	Event	Remark
4/25/08	BRED	7H9535 6T
2/27/08	MAST	RR
2/18/08	MAST	RR
2/16/08	TERRI	
2/16/08	KETOSIS	PROPYLEN
2/ 4/08	FRESH	XLRR

Cow ID :203
Repro Status : BRED
Checked for Vet Code : PREG
Days since last heat : 47

1 [SKIP]
OK
Restart Cow
Exit

The most used part of this is the list of events in the lower left hand side of the screen. There is also a “Tests” button that will display the cow’s test days so culling decisions can be made during Vet Enter.

One additional feature has been added and that is VETENT now calls SETDAY when it starts up, defaulting to “Today” the logon date of the cowfile. When the VETENT procedure is finished, it will re-set the date of the cowfile to the original logon date of the cowfile – usually this is computer’s system clock date. This was done to help those who enter the vet information on a different day than the vet’s visit and sometimes forget to change the date back before other data entry is done. For those who do their data entry the same day as the vet visit, there will be one extra hit of the enter key when starting VENTER.

In a similar manner, entering events now displays data across the whole page. This is primarily a display of the current events in the animal's record.

The screenshot shows a web application interface for entering data for cow 208. The top status bar displays "ENTER", "EDAY 05/30/08", and "REM". Below this, a red text label reads "Entering data for cow 208". The main data entry area is a large blue rectangle with a yellow header bar labeled "FRESH Event Remark". A red circle highlights a small icon in the bottom left corner of the blue area. On the right side, a list of events is displayed, with a red circle highlighting a red arrow icon at the top right of the list. The events listed are:

Events : 6	
5/27/08	XID
2/ 9/08	OK 172 DAYS
10/25/07	FREG 65 DAYS
9/21/07	BULLPEN
8/21/07	BRED 7H6155
1/ 6/07	CALFVAC

In the upper right hand corner are recent entries that have been made. The events for this animal are listed on the right center. Clicking on the red arrow will switch the event listing from the newest to the oldest at the top of the list. In the lower left portion of the screen is an expandable calendar that can be used to change the event date (EDAY) for the entry.

Consultant's corner

For those consultants that have clients who DHIA process at centers in the Rockies and eastward, there are now downloads available off the web to get copies of your clients' records. From Ag Source, Dairy One and Minnesota the files are cowfiles that can be absorbed into the consultant's cowfile. From DART, there are STF (standard transfer format) files available. From Provo there are DC files that are formed for this same purpose. In the case of these last two processors, it is possible to get their files converted on the web into a DC cowfile for direct use or absorbed into a consultant's cowfile. The processing centers do charge for this service and we have contact information available at each center to anyone who would like to take advantage of this. We also have detailed instructions that describe the procedure that are available from support.

Pocket CowCard Continues to Expand in Use and Flexibility

As with all of our software, Pocket CowCard continues to develop, in large part, through feedback and requests from its users. Thanks to all of you! In the last year, changes have been made to Pocket CowCard that many users might find helpful. This article describes some of the enhancements that have recently been added or refined. A general overview of Pocket CowCard has been included in previous newsletters. For broader information regarding the use of Pocket CowCard for cowside data entry, you can also watch a short video included on our update CD or by visiting our website at www.vas.com.

The Breeding Grid in Pocket CowCard

The breeding grid is designed to promote easy cowside entry of breedings by the AI technician. It was designed adopting the fundamental procedures many breeders use to record their breedings on paper.

Row	ID	Sire	Code
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			

Unposted Posted Zapped

7 8 9 CLR DEL
4 5 6 Advance Down
1 2 3 Fill Sire
. 0 ENT Fill Code
Zap
Disable Entry Screen Cow
Exit View RFID Post

The grid is accessed through the “Tools/Batch Command Forms” menu. Animal numbers can be tapped or scanned into the grid.

If the breeder wants to examine each animal suspected of being in heat prior to adding her to the grid, the option to “Screen Cow” can be checked on the lower right corner of the grid. With this option checked, each animal tapped or scanned will be displayed and the breeder can then decide what to do. If “Breed” is selected from an animal’s record display, her number is added to the grid.

A list of animals to breed can be generated before sires are selected or sires can be entered with each animal at the time the animal is added to the grid. This is done by cycling through the option to the right of the number keys and selecting “Advance Down”, “Advance Up”, or “Advance ID-Sire”.

Sire selection options include last sire used or, if entered in DC305, mating choices SIR1 and SIR2. Of course the breeder can also type in the sire to be used. If the majority of breedings will use the same sire or breeding code, those in the grid that will use something different from the majority can be entered, after which “Fill Sire” or “Fill Code” can be used to fill in the same sire or code for the remaining breedings.

When a select group of breedings have been entered on the grid, the grid can be locked by selecting the option to “Disable Entry” on the lower left corner of the screen. This allows the breeder to reference the grid as breedings are performed without accidental taps. Once breedings are performed, the grid can be unlocked and posted. At the time each turn of breedings is posted, the technician will be prompted for “TECH” and “HDAT”. Posting will also open a new blank turn. All posted turns can be accessed and edited from the “Posted” tab.

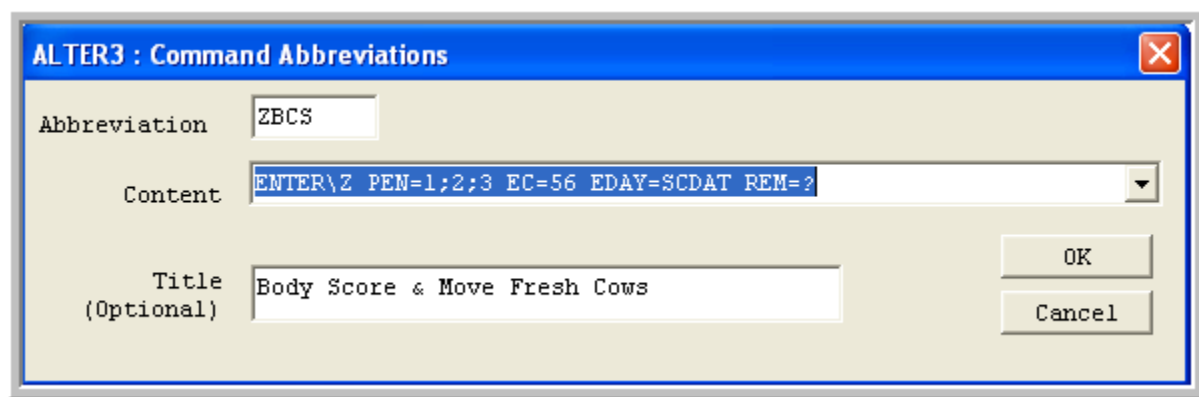
When the technician is finished, all posted turns are delivered back to DC305 with the same “Deliver Posts” option used for all other lists and transactions.

Expert Batch Command Form in Pocket CowCard using “ENTER \Z”

The Expert Batch Command Form has been in Pocket CowCard for some time but recent additions have made it much easier to use. This form is for executing a command for any ID scanned or tapped. Because commands had to be typed into the Expert Batch command form, it was not always easy to use. Commands can now be built in DC305 and transferred to Pocket CowCard at Refresh using “ENTER\Z”.

Executing a command in Pocket CowCard can have the advantage of added flexibility in entering information. For example, a user might want to move fresh cows from the fresh pen to one of three pens and record body condition score while doing so.

If there is an event in DC305 called “BCS”, this event could be entered, along with the destination pen for each animal scanned or tapped when checking fresh cows to move. A command such as the following might be added to DC305. In this example BCS is Event Code 56.



ALTER3 : Command Abbreviations

Abbreviation: ZBCS

Content: ENTER\Z PEN=1;2;3 EC=56 EDAY=SCDAT REM=?

Title (Optional): Body Score & Move Fresh Cows

OK Cancel

After Refreshing, the above command will be available in Pocket CowCard by selecting “Tools”/“Batch Command Forms”/“Expert Batch Command Form”.

In the Expert Batch command form, the option “Select a Pre-Defined Command” will list all ENTER\Z commands that have been created in DC305.

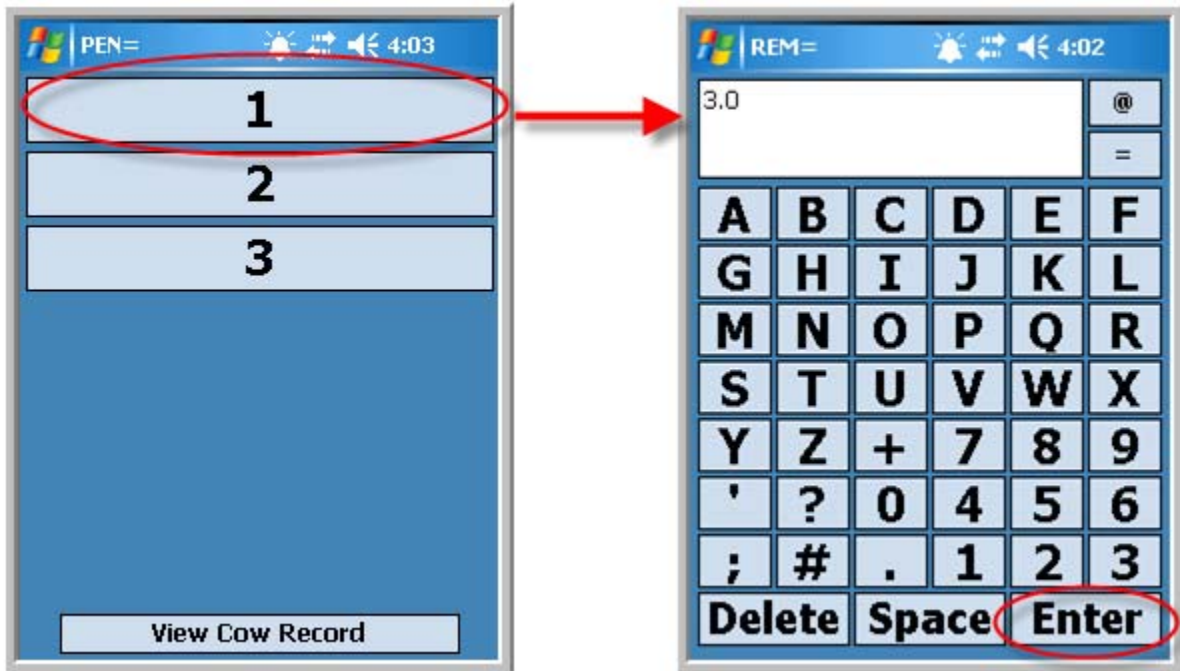


If “OK” is tapped, the user is returned to the expert batch command form with the selected command now displayed.

The group of animals subject to this command being run can be limited by selecting a command list in the box “For Cows in list”. If a list is selected, the command will only be applied to animals on the list selected and animals not on the list will simply return a “buzz”.

To carry the example, Cow 526 is now 14 days in milk and ready to be moved from the fresh pen. If she is tapped or scanned, Pocket Cow-Card will first prompt for pen, limiting the options to either pen 1, 2, or 3 and then prompt for the remark of the BCS (EC=56 in this case) event. The date of the event will be set to the scan date.

This Cow will be assigned to pen 1 and has a body condition score of 3.0 which will be entered as the remark.



When this entry is posted to DC305, her record will reflect the pen change and the BCS event that was entered.

File Reports Custom Health Enter1 Enter2 Meter\Test Bredsum Analysis 1 Analysis 2 Help									
Command ?									
ID 526									
Events Items1 Items2 TestDays PrevLacts Lactation									
DIM	14	RPRO	FRESH	RELV	0	MILK	0		
PEN	1	DCC	0	305ME	0	SIR1	11J774		
LACT	3	TBRD	0	CWVAL	1136	SIR2	122J5198		
EID	982000053935440			PGVAL	0	SCC	0		
10/12/08 FRESH				10/26/08 BCS 3.0					

Important symbols used in creating ENTER\Z commands include the following;

- “,” is used to separate options when limiting choices. For example, “PEN=1;2;3” would only allow entering pen=1,2, or 3. This is the same in DC305 commands
- “?” is used to prompt for an entry. For example “REM=?”
- “@” is used to prompt for a value but display and default to the current item value. For example, in the case of cow 526 above, “SIR1=@” would prompt for SIR1 but would display “11J774” for editing.

“[value]++” is used to start from a specified value and auto increment up from that value. For example, “COD2=25++” would set COD2=25 for the first animal scanned and COD2=26 for the second animal without prompting.

Once new commands have been added using “ENTER\Z it is worth knowing that under the SERVER command in DC305, Option 3 to configure, there is a new tab called “PCC Lists”. This tab lists all SERVER commands and ENTER\Z commands in one location for review and editing.

Pocket Tester as a Handheld Milk Testing Solution

Pocket Tester has been developed to provide a means of efficiently recording milk weights in parlors where EID or visual tags are easily read. It can be used to improve testing speed and accuracy. It has proven very effective in parallel and herringbone parlors specifically and has been used in some rotary parlors as well. If you are using Pocket CowCard, Pocket Tester is available as a possible solution for milk testing. Once installed, Pocket Tester is updated just like Pocket CowCard through Web updates.

Pocket Tester or PT305 functions much like Pocket CowCard in that it refreshes from DC305 and all data collected in PT305 is accessed after posting and delivering to DC305.

Stall	Cow	Weight	Sick Code
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			

Testing	Posted	Zapped	Herd	Errors
7	8	9	CLR	DEL
4	5	6	Advance Down	
1	2	3	Next Turn	
.	0	ENT	Setup	
			Post	

Admin

Pocket Tester is presented as a grid similar to the Breeding Grid in Pocket CowCard. Due to the nature of testing, however, multiple turns can be opened at one time as defined by the number of sides in setup. The user can decide if they want to “Advance Down”, “Advance Up” or “Advance ID-WHT”. There is even an option to advance odd-even for larger rotary parlors in which two pocket tester programs are used.

“Next Turn” is used to cycle through all current unposted turns. For example, in a double 30 parlor, the user would most often have two turns active at any time.

When information for a side has been entered, the turn is posted using the Post button. As with the Breeding Grid, all posted turns can be reviewed and edited from the “Posted” tab.

Errors such as cows not fresh but reported coming through the parlor are listed on the “Errors” tab for easy reference.

Post Turn 2:30

Starting Sample 384

All cows in the turn are assigned a sample number consecutively indexed from this initial value.

Pen Assignment 2

All cows in the turn are assigned to this pen. You may override individual pen assignments by tapping the turn from the "Posted" tab.

Cancel Post Turn

At the time information for a turn is posted, the user is prompted for starting sample number for the turn as well as current pen. Sample numbers are then assigned to each cow in the turn being posted. The next turn posted will prompt for this same information but will default to the next available sample number based upon the tester preferences in setup. Of course if samples are not being collected, sample number can be ignored.

Setting up PT305 is fairly straight forward as displayed in the screens below.

Setup 3:03

Number of Sides: 2 Maximum Wt.: 99

Stalls / Side: 26 Milking #: 1

Starting Stall: 1

Validation Options **Weight Entry Options**

☒ Validate Cows ☒ 2-digit Minimum

☒ 2-digit Auto-Advance

Parlor Sampling Communications

Done

Setup 2:49

Sampling Options

☐ Samples Only

☐ Assign sample # to All Stalls

☐ DO NOT assign sample # to Sick Cows

Parlor Sampling Communications

Done

The number of sides and number of stalls need no explanation. The starting stall is used when multiple pits are involved. Defining the starting stalls differently allows the user to evaluate information collected based on the stall at which it was collected and thus by both stall or pit.

Defining the maximum weight helps reduce errors as does requiring a two digit minimum when entering a milk weight. This prevents errors such as entering a 5 when the actual weight was 50.

“Validate Cows” is an option almost always used. It will make PT305 prompt if an ID is entered that is not in the herd.

“Two digit Auto-Advance” will make PT305 automatically move to the next stall when a two digit milk weight has been entered making milk weight entry possible without ever tapping the enter button. Once information has been captured in PT305 it can be processed through DC305 and provides much more information than milk weights. We are working on a full PT305 interface utility that will produce parlor performance reports based on the information captured by PT305. Being able to evaluate the parlor as a unit over the course of multiple tests will add far more value to collecting individual weights.