

Sign on for milk recording

The level of mastitis in a herd may not be fully recognised unless records of clinical cases and subclinical cases (revealed by cell count data) are available. Milk recording provides individual cow cell counts (ICCC) and an opportunity to keep long-term records of clinical cases.

Regular collection of ICCC enhances:

- culling decisions;
- management decisions – such as drying-off low producers; and
- mastitis control:
 - monitoring udder health over a lactation.
 - enabling selective Dry Cow Treatment strategy as an option for consideration.
 - assessment of the contribution of individual cows to bulk milk cell counts (BMCC) if problems should arise.

The Herd improvement organisations' FAQ sheet describes service providers of milk recording in Australia.

Herd records are available for 60% of dairy cows in Australia, with about one-half of herds using the service (National Herd Improvement Association of Australia 1999). On average, herds are tested about six times per year.

Dairy herds using milk recording (1998/99)

State	Total no. herds	% using milk recording
Western Australia	450	75%
South Australia	730	67%
Victoria	9,384	46%
Tasmania	747	62%
New South Wales	1,600	59%
Queensland	1,642	45%

Technote 12 describes benefits of using individual cow cell counts to detect subclinical mastitis.

Technote 4.9 gives an example of data entry and reporting of clinical cases through milk recording.

An Australian Breeding Value (ABV) for cell count is currently being prepared by the Australian Dairy Herd Improvement Scheme.

National milk recording statistics are available annually in the Australian Herd Improvement Report.

At a minimum, milk recording involves periodic collection of milk samples from individual cows and collection of information on calving and drying-off dates in paddock books or sheets provided by the centre.

Farmers can opt for a number of different services that vary in the frequency and type of testing (e.g. 1, 5, 7 or 11 times per year), analysis of more detailed herd parameters (such as heat and mating dates) and the supply of extra labour on test days. About three-quarters of farmers use a 'farmer collection' service where they set-up the milk meters in their own shed, collect the samples during milking, and send them to the laboratory.

The cost of milk recording ranges from \$5-15 per cow per year according to the service chosen. Milk recording provides:

- measures of each cow's milk, protein and fat yield for each test day and the whole lactation;
- measures of individual cow cell counts (ICCC); and
- systems of recording stock identifications and pedigree, mating dates and reasons for culling.

Reports supplied by herd improvement organisations enable cow performance over previous years to be easily assessed. They include individual cow lactation and cell count reports (examples of test day reports are shown on the following pages), action lists for mating and culling decisions, herd health reports, and stock registers.

In addition to routine summaries, some organisations offer more intensive analyses to help investigate mastitis problems.

Milk recording can increase the sale value of stock. In New Zealand, where 90% of dairy herds participate in milk recording, cows that are not tested are devalued in the market place.

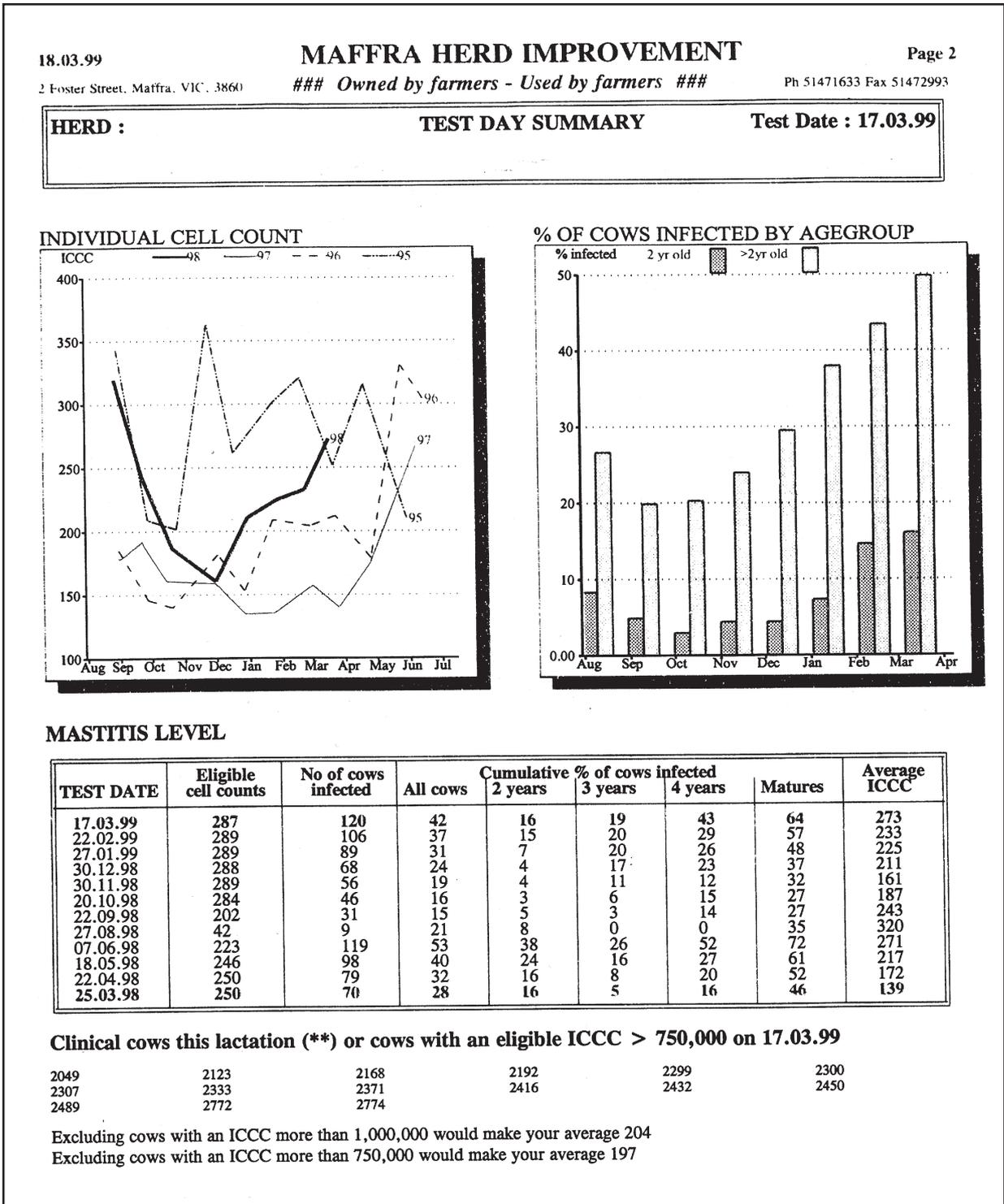
Key paper

National Herd Improvement Association of Australia. Dairy herd improvement report 1997-1998, Australian Dairy Herd Improvement Scheme, 1999.

Since 1 April 1997, each participating dairy herd in Australia has been uniquely identified in the national database. This enables people to access previous milk recording results for purchased cattle by requesting their local centre to transfer the cow history using the national database link.

Technote 12.3 describes special ICCC analyses that are available.

Example of a test day summary from Maffra Herd Improvement Co-operative



Example of a test day report from the Tasmanian Dairy Industry Authority

TDIA Example Report 'Hadspen Park' Hadspen 7290		Tasmanian Dairy Industry Authority Production Report In 'Cow ID' order																		
ZZZ 9999		This test 11-Nov-1999 PM		Actual sample test results			Daily averages since last test			Interval kg		Lactation totals to date								
Cow Id	Cow Name or number	Sire Id	Test Days	R' Code	Days	Milk L	Fat %	Prot %	Cell count	Milk L	Fat %	Prot %	Solids kg	Fat kg	Prot kg	Days	Prod \$	%		
8720	720	THIOE14	2	8	D1									1597	45	47	69			
8724	724	THIOE27	2	8	D1									1510	64	50	56			
8805	805	KELLY	3	30		9.68	6.10	3.71	130	24.86	5.53	1.37	2.25	41	26	8805	1942	105	67	88
8830	830	17FFF49	3	30		13.30	3.77	2.94	58	34.24	2.59	0.89	1.88	27	30	8830	2288	66	67	73
8832	832	17FFF63	2	30		7.25	5.01	3.56	* 2464	19.50	3.73	0.73	1.41	22	20	8832	1611	57	56	78
8901	901	PEGABUC	2	30		13.81	4.65	3.13	57	33.37	4.20	1.40	2.48	42	32	8901	1479	63	48	44
8902	902	PEGABUC	3	30		12.35	5.25	3.35	28	30.82	4.24	1.31	2.28	39	29	8902	1994	80	65	69
8917	917	ANDA	2	30		10.34	5.19	3.38	* 1397	28.16	4.03	1.13	2.07	34	28	8917	1965	77	65	66
9012	12	ENHANCE	2	30		11.90	4.98	3.15	* 3178	29.91	4.45	1.33	2.27	40	28	9012	2815	130	88	91
9026	26	ENHANCE	3	30		13.18	3.98	2.97	36	32.96	3.50	1.15	2.10	35	28	9026	2717	95	77	91
9029	29	BUSHLEA	3	30		10.55	4.73	3.47	1	25.51	4.46	1.14	2.00	34	26	9029	1969	90	68	83
9030	30	BAYONET	3	30		13.87	3.67	3.08	4	37.03	3.51	1.30	2.39	39	33	9030	3202	118	93	91
9038	38	ANDA	2	30		11.16	6.37	3.68	15	26.85	5.19	1.39	2.37	42	29	9038	1353	69	49	50
9101	101	VALE	3	30		13.68	5.07	3.53	10	32.64	4.44	1.45	2.61	44	35	9101	2484	120	87	82
9106	106	MAGOB1	3	30		12.61	4.79	3.46	19	31.60	4.30	1.36	2.41	41	31	9106	2368	108	80	77
9112	112	AWARD	2	30		13.92	5.89	3.29	4	33.40	4.83	1.61	2.65	48	31	9112	1988	95	60	59
9115	115	VALE	3	30		13.12	4.93	3.30	63	33.46	4.27	1.43	2.51	43	33	9115	2982	130	93	88
9116	116	VALE	3	30		12.68	5.03	3.42	172	31.04	4.32	1.34	2.36	40	31	9116	2217	94	74	76
9123	123	MAGOB1	3	30		12.86	4.53	3.36	10	33.07	4.22	1.40	2.46	42	32	9123	2787	123	90	87
9124	124	MAGOB1	3	30		13.25	5.03	3.14	1	32.99	3.98	1.31	2.32	39	30	9124	2287	103	72	69
9129	129	MAGOB1	3	30		12.45	4.86	3.14	125	30.67	3.62	1.11	2.09	33	29	9129	2465	93	77	84
9132	132	MAGOB1	3	30		10.53	3.50	3.07	16	25.13	3.45	0.87	1.63	26	23	9132	2174	77	63	90
9140	140	ZERBUC	3	30		11.83	3.31	3.15	16	33.78	3.04	1.03	2.05	31	31	9140	2858	96	85	89
9141	141	MAGOB1	3	30		11.10	4.58	3.61	2	27.97	3.81	1.07	2.03	32	29	9141	1819	70	64	69
9144	144	MAGOB1	2	30		13.91	3.83	2.52	1	35.23	3.22	1.13	2.04	34	27	9144	1838	59	48	51
9147	147	MAGOB1	2	30		12.61	5.43	3.08	78	29.27	2.93	0.86	1.81	26	29	9147	1402	32	46	48
9148	148	VALE	2	30		14.01	5.01	3.36	180	30.75	4.61	1.42	2.41	43	30	9148	1478	70	47	49
9203	203	VALE	3	30		13.48	4.74	3.07	184	29.30	3.81	1.12	2.02	34	27	9203	2856	106	86	95
9209	209	VALE	3	30		8.75	5.39	3.73	* 853	21.35	5.43	1.16	1.92	35	23	9209	2499	122	85	96
9210	210	VALE	3	30		21.30	4.20	3.02	6	44.73	3.26	1.46	2.78	44	40	9210	3815	134	112	85
9211	211	VALE	2	30		16.97	4.05	2.94	5	38.52	3.57	1.37	2.56	41	35	9211	2021	73	63	53