



Real Farms, Real Talk: How 10 Farms Use Dairy One DHIA Services

Every farm is different—and Dairy One strives to offer customized services to farms that best suit their information needs. We asked a panel of farms how they use Dairy One DHIA services to gather information and make informed decisions.

Meet our panel:

Muranda Holsteins
Blane Murray, Farm Manager
Waterloo, New York
90 cows, Tie Stall

Red Line Farm
Tracy Stanko, Owner
Utica, New York
60 cows, Tie Stall

Adam Hulton, Owner
Freedom, New York
45 cows, Tie Stall

Milky Way Farm
Matt Ferry, Herdperson
Westport, Massachusetts
700 cows, Double 16 Parallel Rapid Exit

Char Marie Farm
Brian and Jeff Haynes, Owners
Bloomville, New York
120 cows, Tie Stall

Wilkin Bros. Dairy
Chris Wilkins
New Market, Virginia
145 cows, Double 8 Parlor

Boucher Family Farm
Amber Machia, Herd Manager
Highgate, Vermont
140 cows, 8x2 Parallel Parlor Rapid Exit

Jeff Bragg, Owner/Operator
Sidney, Maine
190 cows, Free Stall (Organic)

Gary Minde, Herdsman
Doug & Penny Bratt
Memphis, New York
100 cows, Tie Stall

Cabhi Farm
Dave White
Clymer, New York
220 cows, 8x2 Herringbone Parlor

What kinds of DHIA test day data do you use?

Murray: I use the Monitor Report and individual SCC reports. I have the technician make vaccination schedules based on age and repro status, and herd inventory reports. I also keep track of my calving interval, which I always want to keep to around 13 months or less.

Stanko: I use Test Day Down by Milk

Report. I top-dress feed with extra grain, so I use this report to decide how much extra grain to feed the cows. I also look at a low producers report to see which cows I should cull or dry off.

Hulton: I look at milk weights and action lists, particularly which cows to preg check or dry off.

Ferry: The reason the farm went on test was a high SCC count of 450,000. In 3 months, we were able to lower it to 270,000 using DHIA test day data. We also use a vaccination report for heifers, a low milk report, and an open cow report.

Haynes: We use action sheets in Scout, the Monitor Report, and the Vet Check Report.

Wilkins: I use the 240 Report from DRMS, Actual SCC. On test day, I get a production report sorted by group and milk weights from high to low. I get vet reports printed on test day, 2 for my cows, and 1 for my heifers. I also get a list of cows over 150 days in milk and a list of those not pregnant.

Machia: I use all of the action lists, especially the preg check list, cows to breed list and cows to dry list. I also use a report which gives me production from highest to lowest for each milking group. Once my samples are processed my technician creates a milk quality report that shows the current test day SCC and previous three SCC for each cow. It also includes the SCC at last test day before dry off for my fresh cows.

Bragg: I use an on-farm customized repro report, which is important for day-to-day management. If a cow comes into heat, I immediately go to that report to look her up and see her status.

Minde: I use Somatic Cell data, custom vaccination lists, and pregnancy lists, primarily preg.

White: On test day, we look at individual production to scan for cows that are not producing as much as we believe they should be. We consider the stage of lactation and reproductive status to decide what action we should take with those cows.

How do you use this test day data?

Murray: The Monitor Report is a good overview of how the herd is progressing. I specifically look at ECM milk and my RHA of my first, second, and third-plus lactation cows. Individual linear scores help me with milk quality and to make culling decisions. I'm on a routine vaccination schedule, so I have to keep track of when to give those shots, and Dairy One helps me do that. I look at the herd inventory because I'm a small herd that uses sexed semen a lot. I can make culling decisions ahead of time before my farm is overcrowded with animals that I don't necessarily need to take care of. And finally, calving interval is a good way to determine if cows are getting bred back quickly, so you always have fresh cows going into the tank.

Stanko: I use test day data to determine which cows to breed and which to dry off. I use a preg check list for both heifers and cows. I use the Monitor Report and like the monthly snapshot on reproductive data, DIM, and times bred. I also use the Pocket List of Cows Report and keep this report on a clipboard in the barn.

I use the SCC results that I get back after test day for culling. I get cow and heifer pages and keep them in a binder and update them regularly. I like to use them as a reference to see cow lineage and history.

My technician prints a list of cows to milk preg check on test day, and I preg test the cows that are eligible, which has helped cut vet costs.

Hulton: I use milk weights to make sure a cow is paying for herself. I use action lists to get cows preg checked on time and to be dried off when appropriate.

Ferry: I use the SCC list to move high SCC cows to the hospital group in order to keep the milk from going in the tank. Test day data also helps me decide what cows should be in what pens, and I am doing a better job of drying cows off.

Haynes: We print out action sheets weekly and use the vet check list in Scout.

Wilkins: I use SCC info to track udder health and try to capitalize on my premiums. I have my cows grouped,



A Dairy One DHIA technician takes a milk sample.

so test day production by group is another tool I use to decide how to move cows and track their production response. I do 2 vet checks monthly on my cows and 1 for my heifers, so vet lists are very important to me.

I have bulls running with cows and heifers, so the vet verifies pregs and tells us how many days pregnant they are. My vet reports are set up so cows verified preg also show for a second check, then once they are verified on the second check, they come off the vet list. I am just beginning to breed cows with AI, and the plan is to keep cows in group 1 as our AI breeding targets. Once any cow hits 150 days in milk and is not pregnant, she'll go to group 2, where they will run with a bull. In summary, the DHIA test day reports are key to my reproductive program.

Machia: I use my preg check list to do my own pregnancy checking on the farm. The list allows me to easily identify cows that are eligible to check and get any open cows back on a re-sync immediately. I use the cows to breed list to enroll fresh cows into my sync program as they are eligible and get them bred on time. These two reports have been instrumental in improving my 21-day preg rate.

My customized milk quality report allows me to identify new infections, chronic infections and also helps me to figure out where cows are getting infected based on their days in milk when they become infected. I then

CMT all cows over 400 SCC and sample them to determine what kind of infections I am dealing with. I work with my vet to determine treatment options and am then able to use the same report to evaluate if those treatments are working. Being able to follow up on my milk quality information on the individual cow level has helped me to control my tank SCC.

Bragg: I use the milk weight highest to lowest report. After test day, the SCC list is very important. As an organic dairy, milk quality is extremely important.

Minde: Somatic Cell data allows us to proactively pursue quality premiums, as subclinical mastitis would otherwise be undetected.

White: When the sample results come back, we look at SCC results. If a cow is high, we look at her contribution to the bulk tank. If she is not confirmed pregnant and has a history of higher SCC levels, she is coded “Do Not Breed”. If she is not a chronic offender, we will keep an eye on her and/or culture her to see what organisms she is infected with, and then make decisions on how to proceed based on the culture results.

We really like the Cows and Heifers Not Confirmed Pregnant lists! It makes us aware of animals that need our attention. It also helps us to make shot lists and DNB/culling decisions.

Are there any other examples of Dairy One services that have helped you make better decisions on your farm?

Stanko: I use blood pregnancy tests with heifers. My nutritionist receives my test day info as well and then communicates to me about any feed adjustments that should be made. My nutritionist uses the Dairy One Forage Lab for analysis.

My culling practices have improved as well, since I now look at test day data, SCC info, and reproductive info to make better decisions on the whole history of the cows. I can make decisions earlier regarding whether to continue breeding a cow, or put her on the Do Not Breed list.

Hulton: I use milk pregnancy testing. It's easy to do since it uses the same sample that the technician already takes on test day. I also don't run the risk of abortions that you have with an arm check, which could result in embryo loss, and that pays for itself.

Haynes: We use Dairy One for forage testing, and we also use the Scout herd management software program. We

really like the cow cards, which are a function of the software program.

Ferry: I use Dairy Comp 305. I also use milk pregnancy testing on cows that run with bulls, and also before cows are dried off.

Boucher: I share reports with my nutritionist if there is a component change or a significant production change, in order to determine how we can change the feed to correct it. I also meet with our vet quarterly and he downloads test day data so we can discuss production and reproduction.

Machia: I really enjoy working with my Dairy One technician to create new custom reports that make my day to day work go more smoothly and also reports that help me to evaluate different aspects of performance over time (such as production, milk quality and reproduction). I also share my Dairy One test information with my veterinarian. We meet quarterly to review performance, identify opportunities and challenges, set goals and evaluate any changes we make.

Bragg: I use the Dairy One Forage Lab for forage testing and I share test results with my nutritionist. I also use Scout software.

Minde: Using milk pregnancy testing has lowered our vet costs.

White: I use Scout software to manage the herd, and the Dairy One Agricultural Management Resources team supports that software. In the future, I'm looking at using milk and blood pregnancy testing, and I'm also interested in installing a camera system to monitor calving pens and increase security.

One thing I love about Dairy One is that they continue to listen to their members' needs and try new things that will fulfill those needs!

We appreciate the feedback from our members on the variety of reports and Dairy One services they are using, and the ways in which they are finding value. If you would like more information on any Dairy One products or services, please contact your local Dairy One Farm Service Technician or call us at 800.244.2697.