



Dairy Details

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NORTHERN VALLEY DAIRY PRODUCTION MEDICINE CENTER

You can't measure what you don't monitor...

Setting goals is important to any business's success, including farms. Goal setting also creates a culture of excellence on farms and gives everyone on your team something to work towards. But goals cannot be set if we don't know where we are starting and can't be met if we don't monitor where we are going.

Many dairy farms already monitor many things including pounds of milk produced, SCC, milk components, etc. But, when it comes to cow and calf health monitoring, there is an opportunity to be capturing more data to help us set goals and improve health on our dairy farms. Decreasing rates of common diseases on our dairy farms will not only increase a farm's bottom line but will also improve animal welfare and create a more positive culture on dairy farms. The following common diseases in dairy cows are estimated to cost this much per case:

- Milk Fever: \$250
- Ketosis: \$180
- Lameness: \$333
- Displaced Abomasum: \$640
- Mastitis: \$426
- Metritis: \$262
- Retained Placenta: \$313



With heifer raising costs being a large portion of many farms' expenses, knowing if a calf has had disease in the past may help determine if you want to put in the investment of raising her all the way up until calving. Calves that have scours in the first 2 weeks of life are more likely to die between 15 to 90 days old. There have also been several studies showing that calves that have had pneumonia will produce less milk when they are cows.

We also can't forget the other reason it is important to record these disease events is because, legally, we have to record when we are administering treatments to these sick animals to prevent milk and meat residues. If you ever do have a residue on your farm, the repercussions are likely to be much less if you have complete health records on your farm.

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FARM 4.0 Takes Effect in 2020

Is your farm due for a FARM (Farmers Assuring Responsible Management) evaluation by your processor soon? If so, do you have the required protocols and documentation in place? The updated FARM 4.0 standards will go into effect in 2020. Some notable changes to the program include:

- Your veterinarian needs to review and sign treatment records annually
- Cattle handling and ethics training is required for not only employees, but all individuals who come into contact with animals (including owners and family members)
- The following protocols will be required and if you can't provide them to your evaluator enforcement action will be taken:
 - o Newborn Calf management
 - o Pre-weaned calf protocol (All calves must be disbudded no later than 8 weeks old)
 - o Pain management (disbudding, castration, injury, disease)
 - o Non-ambulatory animal management
 - o Euthanasia
 - o Culling and transport to slaughter

As FARM standards have changed over the last couple of years, our veterinarians have stayed informed and are equipped to help you develop the required protocols and put together a "FARM Binder" so that you are prepared for an evaluation. Contact us if you would like our assistance!

Working with your veterinarian to develop health protocols and to train employees in identifying sick animals will be an important part in keeping accurate records. The first step in recording health events is often the hardest, yet the most simple: writing the information down. It's so easy to forget to write down that calf #100 had pneumonia and was treated with drug XYZ. And sometimes it seems impossible to find those 30 extra seconds in a day to write it down in a log or notebook. I encourage people to always have a pen and small notebook with them or even write a note in your phone and then you can transfer it into your treatment log later.

Everyone has a computer available to them today. Even if you don't have DairyComp 305, you can still utilize programs such as Excel to record your health events and track the incidence on your farm. We see DairyComp 305 being very underutilized when it comes to recording health data and treatments. There is a lot of information and training available to teach you and your employees to how to best record and monitor health events on DairyComp305. If you have questions about this, any of our veterinarians would be happy to help you develop a health monitoring program on your farm.

So now that you have a health monitoring system in place, it's time to goal set! Next month, we'll discuss what are realistic goals when it comes to health on dairy farms and how reaching these goals can put more money in your pocket.



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