



COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

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Louisiana

Dairy Digest

Your Herd Management Resource

EXTENSION PROGRAMS

Agriculture
Economic/Community Development
Environment/Natural Resources
Families/Nutrition/Health
4-H Youth Programs

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Don't Wait to Deal with High Bulk Tank Somatic Cell Counts (BTSCC) Gary M. Hay, Dairy Specialist

It's that time of year again. Hot weather, stale cows and poor quality forages combine to reduce milk yield and bulk tank somatic cell counts (BTSCC) start to rise. Don't wait to start developing a plan to keep your BTSCC under control. Every year we get numerous calls from producers on 5th sample. By this time, the BTSCC is close to being out of compliance and the producer only has 21 days to make sure he/she stays in compliance or risk losing the right to ship milk. This makes it extremely difficult and many times financially painful to solve the problem. In other words, the producer has to either dry off or cull a substantial number of cows. Any time your BTSCC goes over 400,000 cells/ml, you should be investigating the possible causes and changing your daily practices to lower the BTSCC.

The first step in lowering your BTSCC is to call someone to come in and take a look around. Your county agent and/or dairy specialist, your veterinarian, your co-op fieldman, etc.: someone who has a good eye for milk quality problems and can give you an objective opinion on what may or may not be causing problems. While that person is on the farm, get them to pull a bulk tank sample to check for specific mastitis causing organisms.

The second step is to get on a program that identifies the somatic cell counts (SCC) from individual cows. BTSCC from the health department or from your milk marketing co-op can tell whether you have a problem, but they can't tell you which cows are causing the problem. As a general rule, herds in Louisiana with BTSCC problems usually have less than 10 cows that are causing the bulk of the problem. If we can identify these cows, we can identify the problem in most herds and deal with it quickly and inexpensively. Monitoring monthly SCC on individual cows can also identify potential problems long before mastitis causes the cow to end up on the cull list. With today's cost of replacement heifers, reducing the number of cows culled because of chronic mastitis is money in your pocket. Think about this: if a cow culled for mastitis brings you \$500 and the cost of a heifer to replace her is \$1500; every cow culled for chronic mastitis is costing you \$1000 just to replace her. If you are on DHIA, the cost of individual cow SCC is \$.25 per cow per month. For every 100 cows you're milking that's \$25 a month or \$300 a year. If the individual cow SCC results can keep you from having to cull one cow, they have saved you at least \$700 a year.



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Check your milking procedures. I mean check on your milk hands. I realize it is hard to find and keep good milkers. However, routinely monitoring milkers and finding some way to get them to milk cows correctly is critical to keeping BTSCC under control. Sloppy milking procedures can be a major contributing factor to high BTSCC. Milking dirty teats, milking wet teats, not adjusting the teat cups during milking and sloppy pre and post dipping procedures are the major milking procedure problems I actually see occurring on farms.

Make sure whoever is milking your cows is using proper pre and post milking teat dipping techniques. Proper teat dipping technique involves dipping the entire lower one-third to one-half of **EVERY** teat in the teat dip; not dipping two or three out of four or spraying teat dip on one side of the teat but not covering the teat end. Explain to your milk hands why it is important to cover the teat end where the teat canal opening is located. This is where bacteria and other organisms enter the teat canal and cause mastitis. Predipping is also a highly recommended, proven technique for reducing the spread of contagious mastitis causing bacteria. Also make sure you are using an independently tested, proven teat dip. Using udder wash compounds or even Clorox as a teat dip is not a very good idea. All of these types of harsh compounds can cause teat end irritation and lead to more cases of mastitis instead of less. The best and probably least expensive recommendation for teat dips is to use a commercially formulated teat dip that is designed specifically as a pre or post dip. A commercial teat dip containing .5% iodine as a disinfectant will work as well as any compound on the market.

Don't stop dry treating because the price of milk is low. Dry treatment is the cheapest form of insurance you can buy. I have dealt with many herds over the past 10 years that have run into problems with *streptococcus agalcatiae* or strep. ag. This is a highly contagious organism that spreads from one cow to another during milking. It causes severe mastitis, extremely high SCC and lowered milk production. Although it is relatively easy to cure, the cure usually requires treating a bunch of cows with antibiotics and dumping a lot of milk. In almost every case, the producer had stopped dry treating 6-12 months prior to the outbreak. The cost of the antibiotics combined with the value of the dumped milk was anywhere from 2-5 times the cost of dry treating those cows.

These are just a few suggestions. I realize controlling BTSCC is a difficult task in Louisiana in the summertime. Don't wait until it reaches crisis proportions before developing a plan to deal with it. That only makes the problem more difficult and more expensive to solve.

WEB SITE OF THE MONTH

The National Mastitis Council has an excellent website that has a tremendous amount of information on preventing and controlling mastitis. This includes topics such as: recommended milking procedures, controlling environmental and contagious mastitis, dry cow therapy, how milking machines affect mastitis and a variety of other mastitis related topics. The site also has links to several other websites which contain additional information on mastitis. The website is located at <http://www.nmconline.org/info.htm>.

Using PCDART Reports to Help Control Bulk Tank Somatic Cell Counts (BTSCC)

Gary M. Hay, Dairy Specialist

One very effective tool for helping to keep BTSCC under control is using monthly individual cow somatic cell counts (SCC) from the Dairy Herd Improvement program in conjunction with the PCDART software program from Dairy Records Management Systems in Raleigh, North Carolina. PCDART is an inexpensive (\$20 per month maximum cost) highly developed software tool for analyzing DHI data.

PCDART has standard reports such as Report 802 shown below that summarizes the individual cow SCC data. Report 802 shows the averages or means for individual cow data during several 'days in milk' or 'stage or lactation' categories. Examining these figures can help identify specific management problems. For example, in this example herd the 1st calf heifers appear to be calving with a higher average SCC score than the older cows. This is not normal and should be an indication that management practices used on springing heifers needs to be examined.

802 Herd Summary - Stage of Lactation and Udder Health Overall Herd
 42650273 UNIVERSITY DAIRY FARM Date of Test 4/10/2002

STAGE OF LACTATION PROFILE

	Stage of Lactation (Cats)	SCC					Total or Avg
		<100	101-200	201-300	301-400	401-500	
Number Milking	1st Lact	6	14	17	25	9	71
	2nd Lact	4	6	13	25	6	54
	3rd Lact	6	17	19	14	3	59
	All Lact	16	37	49	64	18	181
Avg Daily Milk Prod lb/cow	1st Lact	57	71	79	60	59	67
	2nd Lact	60	69	60	66	60	73
	3rd Lact	63	69	60	60	60	63
	All Lact	76	80	85	62	56	73
SCC Index*	1st Lact	3.4	1.9	2.1	3.0	3.5	2.7
	2nd Lact	2.6	1.5	2.3	3.0	3.6	3.1
	3rd Lact	2.5	2.5	4.0	4.3	4.3	3.3
	All Lact	2.8	2.2	2.9	3.6	3.7	3.1
SCCs >33	Number	2	7	11	24	9	53
	Percent	13	13	24	36	60	29

* SCC data in this table are always displayed as linear scores.

CURRENT SOMATIC CELL COUNT SUMMARY

	% Cows by SCC Score				
	0-123	4	5	6	3.5 and over
Below	142,000	284,000	895,000		
Above	442,000	289,000	698,000	1,100,000	1,100,000
1st Lact	73	11	10	3	3
2nd Lact	60	16	15	4	0
3rd Lact	42	24	8	14	13
All Lact	58	17	12	7	5

The second report was created by a PCDART user to list all the cows in the herd in current test day SCC order. This report quickly tells the user which cows are contributing most heavily to the BTSCC. It also tells the producer whether these cows have a chronic problem (more than one test day with a high SCC), if these cows are getting close to drying off, if their milk production is still high enough to keep milking them or if it is time to start thinking about culling any of them.

030 - SCC - Milking Cows (Curr SCC Order)

UNIVERSITY DAIRY FARM

PCDART Report

G	Barn	Curr	Cur	Pct	Prev	Pre	Days			
R	Name	Milk	T.D.	SCC	Blk	T.D.	SCC	In	Calv	Due
P	Name	Milk	Act	SCC	Milk	Act	Milk	Date	Date	Date
4	1860	31.2	3200	3	35	303	416	7-23-01	12-03	
2	1434	63.7	2599	6	78	1213	297	11-19-01	11-03	
2	1334	62.3	2263	5	76	3940	295	11-21-01	10-29	
1	1583	98.1	2111	7	122	2425	340	10-07-01	1-09	
1	1607	50.5	1970	3	62	1715	427	7-12-01	12-24	

The third report is part of an individual cow page in PCDART that shows all of the test day data for the current as well as previous lactations on each cow in the herd. The cow page also contains all the cow's breeding as well as ancestry, complete lactation and other data. All this information is easily accessed in PCDART to assist the producer in making management decisions concerning individual cows.

Test Day Data For Current Lactation					
B #	DIM	Milk	Fat%	Pro%	SCS
---	L#1	2001Jul			
	39	50.4	4.0	3.0	303
	66	40.1	5.0	3.2	373
	96	43.4	5.1	3.3	187
	122	43.9	6.0	3.4	230
	150	39.2	5.4	3.5	283
	178	38.3	6.1	3.6	606
	220	38.1	5.9	3.8	174
	235	35.1	6.1	4.1	303
	262	31.2	6.2	3.9	3200

These are just three examples of the type of tools available in PCDART. Producers can also create their own customized reports to match the needs of their individual farms. PCDART is an inexpensive, highly flexible, user-friendly tool to help dairy producers monitor and control BTSCC. Contact your local county agent or the LSU Dairy Science Department at 225-578-6099 for more information concerning PCDART and the DHI program.

Dairy Provisions/Programs of the 2002 Farm Security and Rural Improvement Act (FSRIA)

C.W. "Bill" Herndon

Department of Agricultural Economics, Mississippi State University

- President Bush signed the 2002 Farm Bill or FSRIA into law on May 13, 2002
 - Became effective *immediately* and will expire on December 31, 2007
- Primary dairy provisions and programs are:
 1. Extended the current \$9.90/cwt. (@3.67% milkfat) support price for milk until December 31, 2007, including a provision that will allow the Secretary of Agriculture to adjust the "butter-powder price tilt" twice a year.
 2. Extension of the Dairy Export Incentive Program through the end of 2007.
 3. Dairy importers will be required to pay an assessment for dairy promotion equal to domestic dairy producers.
 4. Increased funding for a variety of conservation programs that will provide cost-sharing funding to farmers participating in "environment-friendly" activities. NRCS programs such as EQIP could provide dairy farmers up to a maximum of \$450,000 to upgrade waste management facilities.
 5. Create a new Dairy Market Loss Payment Program that will, for the first time, provide dairy farmers deficiency payments when the price of milk falls below a specified level. These payments are called "counter-cyclical" payments because farmers will receive income supports from the USDA only when the Class I milk price in Boston, Massachusetts drops below the predetermined price of \$16.94 per cwt.

How do these counter-cyclical payments work?

- ALL U.S. dairy farmers are eligible to receive these counter-cyclical payments.
- Counter-cyclical payments will be made for the period between December 1, 2001 and September 30, 2005 (or 3-years and 10-months).
- Monthly payments will amount to 45% of the difference between \$16.94 per cwt. and the current month's Class I milk price in Boston, Massachusetts. The \$16.94 price was the Northeast Dairy Compact's Class I price and 45% was the average Class I utilization in the Northeast Federal Order.
- Farmers would receive these counter-cyclical payments on a maximum of 2.4 million pounds of milk produced per fiscal year. Maximum payment pounds are limited to equal the amount of milk produced by a 135-cow dairy.
- Farmers will be required to sign up at their local Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices sometime in July to qualify for these counter-cyclical payments.
- USDA expects that the first checks for the first 7-8 months of counter-cyclical payments will be mailed to dairy farmers in September.

Questions: How will USDA/FSA write the "rules" for counter-cyclical payments?

- What is a dairy farm operation? Is it a location or multiple owners? Multiple caps?
- Can dairy farmers "pick and choose" the months they wish to receive payments?

Expected Counter-Cyclical Payments

- The table below shows the Target Price of \$16.94 and each month's Class I milk price in Boston from December, 2001 through June, 2002
- Difference between \$16.94 and the month's Boston Class I price ranged from \$1.71 to \$2.66 and has averaged \$2.04 per cwt. over this 7-month period.
- 45% of the Difference between \$16.94 and the month's Class I price ranged from \$0.7695 to \$1.1970, or averaged \$0.94 per cwt. during this 7-month period.
- Assuming 200,000 pounds of milk produced per month, monthly counter-cyclical payments range between \$1,539 & \$2,394 and average \$1,872 during this period.
- Again under these milk output assumptions, the cumulative total counter-cyclical payments would amount to \$13, 104 for the first 7-months of this program.

	Target Milk Price — \$/cwt. —	FO #1 Boston Class I Price — \$/cwt. —	Difference Target vs. Boston Price — \$/cwt. —	45% of Difference in cwt. —	Pounds of Milk Rec. Payments	Assumed Counter-cyclical Payments — Dollars —	Cumulative Counter-cyclical Payments — Dollars —
Dec '01	\$16.94	\$15.23	\$1.71	\$0.7695	2,000	\$1,539.00	\$1,539.00
Jan '02	\$16.94	\$15.21	\$1.73	\$0.7785	2,000	\$1,557.00	\$3,096.00
Feb	\$16.94	\$15.20	\$1.74	\$0.7830	2,000	\$1,566.00	\$4,662.00
March	\$16.94	\$14.87	\$2.07	\$0.9315	2,000	\$1,863.00	\$6,525.00
April	\$16.94	\$14.72	\$2.22	\$0.9990	2,000	\$1,998.00	\$8,523.00
May	\$16.94	\$14.51	\$2.43	\$1.0935	2,000	\$2,187.00	\$10,710.00
June	\$16.94	\$14.28	\$2.66	\$1.1970	2,000	\$2,394.00	\$13,104.00
7-Month AVERAGE		\$14.86	\$2.08	\$0.94		\$1,872.00	

Calculate Your Counter-Cyclical Payments

- You may wish to calculate the expected counter-cyclical payments for your farm using the table listed below. Simply fill-in your monthly milk production and do the arithmetic – but remember 2.4 million pounds is the maximum amount you can .

	Target Milk Price \$/cwt. —	FO #1 Boston Class I Price \$/cwt. —	Difference Target vs. Boston Price \$/cwt. —	45% of Difference in cwt. —	<i>Enter Pounds of Milk Produced on Your Farm</i>	<i>Your Farm's Counter-cyclical Payments — Dollars —</i>	<i>Your Farm's Cumulative Payments — Dollars —</i>
Dec '01	\$16.94	\$15.23	\$1.71	\$0.7695	_____	_____	_____
Jan '02	\$16.94	\$15.21	\$1.73	\$0.7785	_____	_____	_____
Feb	\$16.94	\$15.20	\$1.74	\$0.7830	_____	_____	_____
March	\$16.94	\$14.87	\$2.07	\$0.9315	_____	_____	_____
April	\$16.94	\$14.72	\$2.22	\$0.9990	_____	_____	_____
May	\$16.94	\$14.51	\$2.43	\$1.0935	_____	_____	_____
June	\$16.94	\$14.28	\$2.66	\$1.1970	_____	_____	_____
<i>7-Month AVERAGE</i>		<i>\$14.86</i>	<i>\$2.08</i>	<i>\$0.94</i>			

- Future Boston Class I milk prices will be reported in issues of our Dairy News: Marketing and Management newsletter published by the MSU-Extension Service.
- Website where Boston Class I milk prices are listed is:
 - o www.fmmone.com/Northeast_Order_Prices/New_Prices_main.htm#Advance

TOP HERDS BY TEST DAY ENERGY CORRECTED MILK (ALL COWS)

NAME	DATE	BR	COWS	DIM	ECM*	FAT%	PRO%	RHA
DARYL & MARY ROBERTSON	5/1	H	80	157	66.2	3.8	3.0	17904
KIRBY VARNADO	4/30	H	108	137	64.1	3.3	2.8	21092
CLIFFORD CHAMPLIN	4/24	H	231	131	63.5	3.6	3.1	20112
BRAD AND GLYNDA TONEY	4/29	H	42	134	63.4	3.5	2.7	19303
J PAUL ALFORD	5/1	H	119	152	62.3	3.4	3.0	19837
LADD BLADES	5/16	H	224	153	61.3	3.6	3.0	18989
BILLY ANDREWS	5/6	H	102	205	60.5	3.5	3.1	20048
SE LA EXP STATION	5/27	H	199	163	59.6	3.5	2.9	21138
EUGENE ROBERTSON	5/9	H	166	193	59.0	3.2	2.8	21751
HALL BURFORD	5/14	H	178	161	58.5	3.4	2.8	19536
GALEN NIGHTINGALE	5/15	H	78	232	57.1	2.9	2.8	21369
BRAD AND GLYNDA TONEY	4/29	A	19	121	56.9	4.1	2.8	14861
FLOYD W STEVENS	5/20	J	54	173	55.7	4.3	3.6	15230
LOUISIANA TECH DAIRY	5/2	H	47	162	55.6	2.3	2.8	21378
TO-BEV FARMS	5/20	H	185	158	55.4	2.8	2.9	19288
FARMER'S DAIRY	5/7	H	49	206	54.7	3.4	2.9	18328
MARK WASKOM	4/25	H	97	187	54.6	3.4	3.0	17389
BROWN DAIRY FARM	5/16	H	186	189	54.1	3.1	3.0	18939
BOBBY GOINGS	4/30	H	93	166	54.0	3.2	3.0	17757
KARIE AND BRAD BLADES	5/28	H	176	228	54.0	3.3	3.1	17385
C JOHNSON & W LITWILLER	5/29	H	91	269	53.7	3.3	3.0	19873
HOLLIS BANKSTON & SONS	5/29	H	94	215	53.2	4.0	3.1	18557
RAYMOND SCHMIDT	5/23	H	74	216	52.2	3.2	2.9	17319
UDDER FRESH	5/10	H	118	198	52.1	3.6	3.1	16878
RUSSELL AND RUSTY CREEL	5/29	H	104	202	50.4	3.3	3.0	16776
CHARLES A BURFORD	4/30	H	146	163	50.4	3.4	2.8	14652
LSU DAIRY	5/20	H	73	202	50.1	4.0	3.0	17664
DUSTY SCHILLING	4/28	H	86	141	49.6	3.6	2.8	18340
MARVIN FLETCHER	5/2	H	158	202	49.1	3.1	2.7	18658
LOUISIANA TECH DAIRY	5/2	J	39	171	48.8	3.2	3.4	15238
O B MITCHELL	5/25	H	73	210	48.6	3.1	3.0	20268
CIRCLE G FARMS	5/16	H	143	148	48.3	3.1	2.9	16992
LEESFIELD DAIRY FARM	5/22	H	95	161	47.8	3.3	3.0	16927
M&M CATTLE COMPANY	5/25	J	30	181	47.7	3.8	3.3	14546
MICHAEL W GUY	5/22	H	65	299	47.4	3.4	3.1	15433
ANDREW R. HERRING	5/30	H	304	174	47.2	3.6	3.0	17392
VERNON S BRIAN	5/20	H	328	126	47.0	2.9	2.9	15260
J W DOC SCHILLING	5/7	H	117	166	46.7	3.6	2.9	15938
JOHN FAUNCE JR DAIRY	5/7	H	218	183	46.6	3.2	2.9	16797
PHILLIP ROBERTS	4/30	H	176	178	45.7	3.3	3.0	18015
FRANCIS HOLMES	5/28	H	59	217	45.7	2.8	3.1	17822
ROBERT POTTS	5/21	H	159	179	44.2	3.1	3.0	16344
DIAMOND S FARM	5/14	H	70	156	43.8	2.9	3.0	18614
PECAN HILL DAIRY	5/23	H	188	218	43.5	3.2	2.9	14710
MOCKING BIRD DAIRY	5/23	H	96	168	43.3	2.9	2.9	19157
PHILLIP ROBERTS	4/30	X	100	139	42.0	3.7	3.2	15836
WJ STAFFORD	5/8	H	150	188	41.5	3.6	2.9	14728
NOLAN DALFORD	5/8	H	120	197	41.0	3.2	3.0	15823

*ECM (Energy Corrected Milk) = (.3246 * MILK LBS) + (12.86 * FAT LBS) + (7.04 * PROTEIN LBS)

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