

CellCheck Milk Recording Testimonials.

We interviewed three of our suppliers. We asked them their motivates, barriers, benefits and any advice for future farmers willing to start milk recording.

- **Farmer 1** - Milk recording for about 20 years.
- **Farmer 2** - Milk Rerecording about 10-12 years.
- **Farmer 3** - Did his first Milk Recording about 2-3 weeks ago.

Question 1 - What motivated you to start Milk Recording?

Farmer 1 - When I started 20 years ago it was all about identifying the best stock in your herd. These top cows were used for breeding to improve the new generation of heifers entering the herd. It also helped to remove some poor performing cows. When the new heifers started arriving into the herd you could really notice the difference in their milk production.

Nowadays, the benefits of milk recording have changed. It is all about using less antibiotics, especially using less at drying off. You're only wasting money putting an antibiotic into a cow that doesn't need it. It has really help to cut costs at drying off, reduce labour, time and be more sustainable going forward.

Farmer 2- We started milk recording about 10-12 years ago and have never looked back. It was a great investment and worth every penny spent. We originally started recording to improve the milk quality and breed from the best. That was our goal and achieved it very easily with the reports we get. We still use milk recording but as new information has developed it can tell us so much more than just SCC and which cows are best for breeding. It can now perform pregnancy testing, information regarding diets and screen testing for disease. We haven't done any of that this year but it something we will highly consider for next year!

Farmer 3 - I completed my first recording only 2-3 week ago. I was having issues with SCC for the last couple months and needed to get to the bottom if it. I couldn't get a hold of it by myself. The report told me 5 cows had high SCC, which I never knew about and wouldn't have picked those cows out myself. They looked perfectly healthy, no curds, good volumes, but you can't argue with data. I can now target and treat those cows this winter so they calf down healthy in the spring. If it wasn't for Milk Recording, they would have gone unnoticed and been a disaster next spring.

Did you have any concerns or difficulties when you started? How did you overcome them?

Farmer 1- Back 20 years ago all recording was manual, with pen, paper and a person hired from the company. It was a lot of work and time consuming, but the advancement of machines and technology is huge. The whole process start to finish is very simple now. It is a two-person job, you could never manage by yourself but

once you know how to work the machines, it doesn't add much time to the over all milking.

Farmer 2 - Identifying the cows was an issue for us at the start. We had to climb up on the rails to try and see cow tag numbers which was very dangerous looking back. After one or two recordings we got all the cows freeze branded and saved ourselves a lot of hassle. Every spring since then, as the heifers go back out to grass, they are freeze branded. I find it works best as they are shedding their winters coats and regrowth is happening. Added bonus is their freeze brand starts to show as the breeding season kicks off.

Farmer 3- The starting up process was so easy, I was amazed. Rang the company, organised a date to start and when the technician called gave me a demonstration on how to use all the machines. I had done recording for one year, a long time ago, so I had some recollection of how to use the machines. The technician was super friendly and couldn't made it any easier for me!

What advice would you give to someone starting Milk Recording in the future

Farmer 1- It is an absolute necessity going forward. I can't imagine myself making any important decisions without looking at my milk recording results. Yes, it is extra labour, but the information you get from it is worth every penny and every minute extra in the parlour. I will continue to milk record for as long as I milk cows. The electronic meters and hand-held machines make everything so easy nowadays. The improvements your herd will gain will outweigh any negative thoughts you might have about getting started.

Farmer 2 - I think with sustainability, environmental changes and veterinary laws being introduced soon you'd be crazy not to milk record. The benefits are endless and you wont regret starting. With all these changes you need to be making the best decisions in order to make profits. You can't make good decisions without the data to back you up. The reports may seem a bit daunting at the start but there are loads of people available to help understand them. Start now, its never too late to pick up the phone to arrange a recording.

Farmer 3 - Stop what you're doing immediately and pick up the phone to arrange your milk recording. I was very hesitant for a long time, but I encourage everyone not to think twice about it. I thought it was bit of money racquet or a tick the box exercise but it really isn't. The money will you save in the long run, improved productivity, better milk cheques is worth every penny spent on recording. If it wasn't for that one recording before drying off, I would have been in a lot of bother next spring. There's nothing stopping you getting one in before dry-off this year.