

Why Milk Record?



What are the sustainability benefits of milk recording?

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The good, the bad and why it is never too late to start

“
You can't improve what you don't measure

◆ Breeding Strategies

- » Choose your most profitable cows to breed the best replacements.
- » Improve milk quality.
- » Identify your best producers, from milk yield to milk solids.

◆ Herd Value

- » Gives a better estimate of the value of your stock if selling, or for disease compensation.

◆ Teagasc National Farm Survey

- » €39 higher gross margin per cow.
- » 178 Litres additional milk yield per cow
- » 29 Kg more milk solids per cow.

◆ Carbon Efficiency

- » Milk recording allows you to increase the herd's productivity, thereby reducing the carbon footprint of every litre of milk.

◆ Animal Health

- » Find out which cows are increasing bulk tank SCC or look at patterns across the year to understand increases in SCC and mastitis.

◆ Animal Welfare

- » Your animal's individual SCC gives an understanding of mastitis management in the herd and is a good animal health and welfare indicator.

◆ Reduced Antibiotic Usage

- » Prescribing dry cow antibiotics requires individual cow information. An animal with high SCC may need a (dry-cow) antibiotic to treat subclinical mastitis. Milk recording gives you and your vet the most accurate information to make the right decisions.

When should I milk record?

At least 6 milk recordings per year are recommended to gather information to support health, breeding and disease treatment decisions. This may seem like a lot if you do not milk record yet, but there are many benefits to planning your milk recordings around the lactation cycle.

✓ First 60 Days in Milk

It might be the busiest time on the farm, but do not wait until all your cows have calved to do the first milk recording! You will get valuable information to review the dry period, including cure rates and new infections. Information on transition cow management is also captured in the first 60 days after calving.

✓ Mid-lactation

- » Identify high achieving cows and those curbing herd performance to make breeding and herd planning decisions.
- » Examine and benchmark milk yield/cow.
- » Test for diseases such as Johne's disease.
- » Reduce the risk of spreading contagious mastitis, by knowing the high SCC cows.

✓ Late lactation

- » When it comes to antibiotics: 'as little as possible, as much as necessary.'
- » For antibiotics to remain effective when they are really needed – for your animals, for you and for your family – lower antibiotic usage is needed.
- » Your veterinary practitioner needs individual cow information to prescribe antibiotic therapies. For accurate dry-cow therapy decisions, cell count data should not be older than 30 days at drying-off.

6

FOR SUCCESS

2

recordings to evaluate the dry-cow management

2

recordings to improve milk quality

2

recordings to safely dry off

We asked farmers who milk record ...

“
... why
do you milk
record?”

- » To identify high SCC cows and cows we want to breed off to improve herd genetics.
 - » For selective dry cow therapy.
 - » To improve herd health and performance.
- ”

“
... what
benefits have
you seen?”

- » Improved milk solids, lower SCC and better heifers coming through.
 - » Breeding from better performing cows, less mastitis due to culling/treatment of high SCC cows.
 - » Steady improvement in milk output.
 - » Management of problem cows. Successful SDCT for the last 5 years.
- ”

“
... what are
the common
misconceptions
about milk
recording?”

- » That it's too complicated for 'me'.
 - » People think it's expensive but that's not true, it's worth doing.
 - » It's not a misconception to think it's a difficult task because it certainly can be for the first few but it's worth it.
- ”

“
... what
would you
tell other farmers
about milk
recording?”

- » For the new dry off regulations milk recording identifies cows that need or don't need dry cow antibiotics.
 - » You'd be very surprised about how the cows you think are best/worst are actually performing.
 - » Great benefits if the information is used. You cannot make decisions on the future without knowing what you have now.
- ”

“
... what
teething
problems did
you have
to overcome?”

- » Just to get the hang of it the first time.
 - » Yes the equipment can be troublesome. We have learned a few tricks over time on how to solve these.
 - » Absolutely..it was stressful..now we pay to have a technician in the parlour to help with the first part of it..hopefully we will be able to wean ourselves off this valuable support shortly.
- ”

Using your milk recording data



DID YOU KNOW: The CellCheck Dashboard on ICBF takes information from milk recording and creates graphs that are easier to read. Speak to your vet or dairy advisor about interpreting your milk recording results and taking the correct actions.

Where can I get more information?



Animal Health Ireland CellCheck programme:
www.animalhealthireland.ie/programmes/cellcheck/

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To access milk recording information visit:
www.icbf.com/milk-recording/

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Milk recording organisations that provide a variety of services:
www.progressivegenetics.ie/milk-recording
www.munsterbovine.ie/Milk-Recording
www.dairydata.ie

Tipperary Co-op Tel: 086-8106661

