

Animal and Dairy Science Department
Rhodes Center for Animal & Dairy Science

Telephone: (706) 542-2581
Fax: (706) 542-9316



GEORGIA DAIRYFAX

<http://www.ads.uga.edu/extension/newsletters.html>

Dear Dairy Producers:

The enclosed information was prepared by the University of Georgia Animal and Dairy Science faculty in Dairy Extension, Research & Teaching. We trust this information will be helpful to dairy farmers and dairy related businesses for continued improvement of the Georgia Dairy Industry.

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Sincerely,



William M. Graves
Professor & Extension Dairy Scientist
wgraves@uga.edu

County Extension Director or County Agent

DAIRYFAX NEWSLETTER

Tifton Dairy Research Center Update

**John K. Bernard and Joe W. West
Dairy Research and Extension**

It has been one of those years that most of us wish had been quite different. The lingering drought, a rare late Easter freeze, smoke from wild fires, and increasing feed and energy prices have caused all of us to change the plans we had made earlier in the year. We have been fortunate in that we have had adequate water to irrigate our forages, at least for now, and we were able to harvest a good first crop of silage and average second crop because of rust and stalk rot problem. That said, we have enough forage to support the herd without drastic changes in our operations, although we will cull harder than we have been during the past year.

The staff at the dairy center has worked on “the little things” that make big differences in performance over the past two years. We are currently milking around 200 cows with a rolling herd average of 26,185 lb for the Holsteins and 20,728 lbs for the Jerseys on the November, 2007 test. Vic Cornett, the dairy manager, has worked with the staff to improve daily management and protocols and post-calving health care. This has allowed the cows to express their genetic potential. We have made a lot of progress, but feel like there we still have opportunities for improvement. The improved production level and increased herd size allows us greater flexibility in selecting cows for use in research trials. This has taken some time and a lot of effort to achieve.

The majority of the herd is milked twice daily, but some of the fresh cows have been milked four times a day for 21 to 28 days during the last year. The data have not been analyzed to determine the effect of this practice, but we have observed a 7 to 8 lb increase in peak milk yield in our first lactation heifers. Not all of this is due to this practice, but it is one of the factors. Since our labor pool does not allow us to milk the herd three times each day, this was an alternative that has shown promise in research trials conducted elsewhere.

If you haven't been by the dairy center for a while, you will see some changes in the facilities. First, the old dairy freestall and feedlot facilities have been demolished. We will use this for storing bagged forage beginning this spring. We have constructed clay mounds with shade structures in each of these pastures used for housing heifers

and dry cows. Many of these pastures were previously equipped with fence line feed bunks over geotextile fabric plus gravel. This combination has provided a much cleaner area for the heifers and helps maintain the grass in the paddocks all year. We have also build a feeding area for the close-up dry cows. As the herd has grown and we added 48 additional Calan gates in the research area, so we not longer have the luxury of letting these animals use the freestall all of the time as they had done in the past. This is working well, but we hope to improve on this by adding some covered calving pens in the future. We have also built a new hay barn to replace the older one that is scheduled to be torn down once we receive approval from the state.

We have been busy the past year with research trials, some of which we have reported and others we are trying to complete so we can get the information out. We currently have two graduate students in Tifton, Jamie Boyd (Ph.D.) and Juan Castro (M.S.), who are working on their research projects. Their work is addressing forage utilization and interactions and nutritional approaches to reduce the amount of heat generated by the diet the cow eats.



34th Southern Dairy Conference, January 30-31, 2008 in Atlanta.

UGA DAIRY HEIFER SHOW , Friday February 8, 2008. 3:00-9:00 PM weigh-in Saturday, February 9, 2008. 9:00AM Showmanship classes will be judged first, starting with the youngest and finishing with the oldest exhibitors, with weight classes immediately following.

Georgia Milk Producers Annual Meeting, February 11-12, 2008. St. Simons, Contact Farrah Newberry at gamilk@bellsouth.net or 706-310-0020

Florida-Georgia Road Show, March 4-7, 2008 in Okeechobee and Mayo FL and Madison and Tifton, GA Contact John Bernard at jbernard@uga.edu or 229-391-6856.

45th Florida Dairy Production Conference, April 29,2008, Gainesville, FL Contact Albert De Vries devries@ufl.edu

What Signs Do You Look For When Detecting Heats?

Dr. William Graves

More than 90 percent of cows should have shown heat by 50 days postpartum. Cows should be cycling every 21 days by that time.

The most reliable sign a cow is in heat is a stand to be mounted by another cow. Each stand lasts only 4 to 6 seconds. Cows average about 1½ mounts per hour and are in heat 15 hours.

Therefore, cows are only in heat a little more than half a day and only spend a total of 3 to 5 minutes actually standing to be mounted. It is easy to understand why you must observe for heat several times throughout the day.

Also, you should look for and record secondary signs of heat. These include:

- mounting other cows
- clear mucous discharge
- chin resting and rubbing
- swollen, red vulva, frequent urination
- muddy flanks and ruffled tailhead
- bawling, restlessness, sniffing behavior
- decreased milk productive

All of these can be indications that a cow is in heat, coming into heat or going out of heat. The decision to breed should be based on standing to be mounted by another cow, not on secondary signs of heat. However, of all the secondary signs, a clear mucus discharge has been reported to be one of the more meaningful signs of heat.

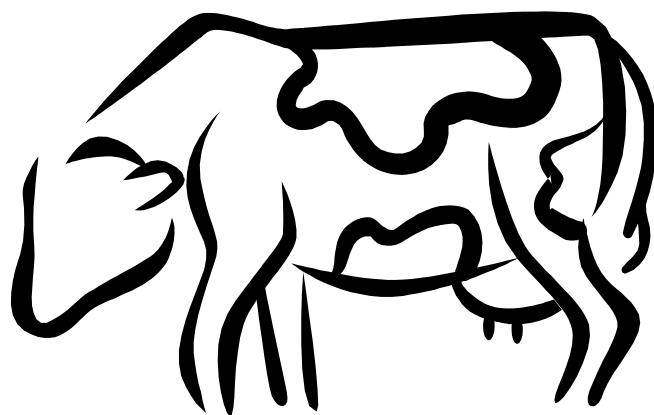
Herdmates play an important role in a heat detection program. Pregnant cows, or those in the early half of their cycle, do not make good heat detectors. Cows in heat, or cows coming into or going out of heat, make excellent detectors.

Prostaglandins can help bring groups of animals in heat, drastically increasing the number of mounts per heat period and making it easier to catch animals in heat. Ovulation synchronization can allow you to breed cows with a timed insemination, thus eliminating some of the need to detect heats. Producers with the lowest heat detection rates generally get the best results from Ovsynch procedures.

Several aids are available to producers. The most popular is the pressure sensitive heat mount detectors. They are activated after 4 to 5 seconds of continuous pressure. Also, the peel and stick detectors have been greatly improved and are useful. All, partial or no rubbing can be easily determined, and you will love the convenience. Also, tailheads can be marked several times a week with chalk or crayons, or bi-monthly with paint.

Producers can then monitor painted tailheads for rubbing activity. Adverse weather conditions can affect overall results obtained.

Need a pay raise with the current high feed prices? Think how much you could save by seeing more heats, getting animals bred sooner after calving and lowering the intervals between calves in your herd. Don't use a herd bull because they are convenient and efficient. Genetically and from a safety standpoint, this is a bad management decision. More importantly, get as much done as you can and let's pray the hot and dry summer being predicted does not get here.



RULES AND REGULATIONS
2008 UGA JUNIOR COMMERCIAL DAIRY HEIFER SHOW
Sponsored by the UGA Dairy Science Club

Requirements are based on the State Junior Commercial Dairy Heifer Show Rules and Regulations for the current year.

1. Dairy heifers must be owned by the exhibitor on or before November 15, 2007.
2. Heifers must be tagged with an official state ear tag on or before November 15, 2007. Tattoos are not required but highly recommended. Photographs are not required as stipulated by State Rules and Regulations.
3. ALL ENTRIES MUST BE POSTMARKED AND MAILED WITH ENTRY FEE (\$11.00 PER HEAD) BY JANUARY 15, 2008. Make check payable to the UGA Dairy Science Club and mail to: Mark Froetschel, Rhodes Center for Animal and Dairy Science, The University of Georgia, Athens, GA 30602-2771.
4. Agent or teacher, exhibitor and parent must sign the entry card.
5. No more than 3 head can be entered by an exhibitor.
6. Heifers shall meet all the requirements for the State show to be eligible.
7. Heifers will be sorted into classes by weight and judged mainly on animal appearance.
8. Showmanship classes will be based on grade in school and will be judged 75% on showmanship and 25% on fitting.
9. Do not bring straw to the cattle barn. Heifers must be bedded with shavings made available at the Arena.
10. An exhibitor will not be permitted to enter the show ring with another student's calf unless it belongs to an exhibitor with two entries in the same class. All other substitutions (ex. Family emergencies etc.) must be approved by the show in advance.

Anticipated UGA DAIRY HEIFER SHOW SCHEDULE

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2008

3:00-9:00 PM Weigh-in

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2008

9:00 AM Showmanship classes will be judged first, starting with the youngest and finishing with the oldest exhibitors, with weight classes immediately following

UGA COMMERCIAL DAIRY HEIFER SHOW
February 9, 2008
Athens, Georgia
UGA Livestock Instructional Arena

NAME _____ GRADE IN SCHOOL _____ EXHIBITOR'S AGE _____
 (PLEASE PRINT) Circle TEE-SHIRT SIZE: Youth -S, -M, - L or Regular, -S, -M, -L, - XL or- XXL

Note: one tee-shirt is provided per exhibitor and t-shirt size must be indicated.

EXHIBITOR'S ADDRESS _____
 (Route #, Box #, P. O. Box # and/or Street Address) (City) (Zip)

COUNTY OR CHAPTER _____ ORGANIZATION: 4-H () FFA ()

EAR TAG #	BIRTHDATE OF HEIFER	DESCRIPTION (breed, color, markings, etc.)

All rules and regulations for the State Junior Commercial Dairy Heifer Show apply. All heifers must be individually tagged by November 15, 2006. See Georgia 4H and FFA State Livestock Show Rules and Regulations for complete details.

I, we, do hereby certify that the above will maintain continuous full ownership, possession and provide daily care for the heifers from the time of entry until show day.

 (Signature of Exhibitor) (Signature of Parent)

 (Signature of County Agent or Vo-Ag Teacher) (Phone) E-Mail

\$11.00 entry fee, **per heifer**, must accompany this entry. Make check payable to UGA Dairy Science Club (**DO NOT SEND CASH**) and mail by **January 15, 2008** to: Mark Froetschel 314 Rhodes Center for ADSC, The University of Georgia, Athens GA 30602-2771 (For information: phone: 706-542-0985 e-mail: markf@uga.edu) **Entry fees are not refundable.** See cover letter/flyer for information regarding **Tee-Shirt design contest**

Make additional copies of this entree form as needed.

The UGA Teaching Dairy in 2007

**Lane Ely
Extension Dairy Scientist**

2007 has been very interesting at UGA Teaching Dairy. The teaching component has continued to expand, with classroom activities and students providing the bulk of labor on the farm. In 2007, 31 different students have worked at the dairy. This varies from 3 hrs per week (one milking) to 30 hrs per week for individual students. Training of students as a labor force is time consuming, but rewarding.

Like all of agriculture (and the urban population) in North Georgia the drought has had a profound effect on our forage progress. In 2006, our sorghum silage crop was a total failure that summer. Luckily, we had a surplus of wheat silage from the spring that would carry us through wheat harvest in 2007. The difficulty came as the 2007 wheat silage harvest was only 40% of normal followed by a sorghum silage harvest of 10% of normal. As the fall started, we did not have enough forage to get to spring wheat harvest. With the high milk prices, it was decided to purchase alfalfa hay at \$240/ton as there was no forage available locally. At the time, a lot of discussion went into the decision. Now three months later with the continued rise in feed prices it looks like an even better decision. Speaking of feed prices, the law of supply and demand is not functioning for feeds today. It will be interesting to see where this goes and how animal agriculture will evolve.

The dairy has continued its seasonal calving program. There were no births between May 15 and September 1. This fall there has been a higher than normal number of males and twins born. I guess it is due to the drought. Not really, but it is as good an explanation as any for the short term change. Last year we had over 60% heifer calves and only two sets of twins, so our averages are normal. On December 1, the breeding program started with an excellent number of animals in heat.

During the summer the lagoon had 4 million gallons pumped out and spread on the crop fields. This helped to alleviate a problem of sawdust building up in the lagoons over the years. This also allowed us to change some pipes and to refurbish the pump for recycling the flush water to the free stall barn.

Two projects were completed. A study on adding fat to the transition cow's diet. The preliminary results show promise to help the transition cow adapt to the demands of lactation.

Another project completed was evaluation of a non-antibiotic treatment for mastitis. If the product continues to show promise then milk would not have to be discarded.

Plans have been finalized for the parlor renovations at the dairy. The project needs to be approved so it can be started. As with everything else this year, prices continue to increase. Hopefully it will be started and completed soon.

2007 has been a good year. Hopefully 2008 will be even better.

Use the High Milk Prices to Your Advantage

**Lane O. Ely
Extension Dairy Scientist**

Milk prices continue to be in the record setting range. There has been a 6 month stretch of high prices. Indications are the higher than normal prices will continue for a period. There is increased demand for milk products world-wide. With the weak U.S. dollar this has led to non fat dry milk from the U.S. being sold in the world market resulting in a tight supply in the U.S. Reserves for cheese is low also.

With the record milk prices, most dairyman are looking at cash surpluses this year. How should one use this cash for the most benefit? For many producers, the early part of this prices run was paying bills from the disastrous 2006 year.

There are several things one can do to take advantage of the income.

1. Keep producing milk, with the increasing feed prices, the normal tendency is to try and decrease your ration costs. This often results in a loss of a few pounds of milk, with today's milk prices, the marginal costs for those lost pounds of milk is still positive. The trick is not to feed for the milk you are not getting, do not feed for 75 pounds of milk when you are getting 60 pounds. It may be better to keep a cow milking to keep facilities full. With today's \$25.00/ cwt milk price, a 20 pound cow can be profitable. Feeding high quality forage will pay large dividends by lowering feed costs. The difficulty is that for much of the Southeast, any forage is the limit feed because of the drought.

2. Pay down debt. A strength to establish is a strong financial position. Using cash reserves to lower debt allows more flexibility as milk prices change (decrease). This gives more money to operating expenses with lowered debt payment. Accounts with the highest interest rates and shortest terms should be paid off first. Accounts Payable should be eliminated.

3. Build reserves. This could be building an emergency cash fund for when milk prices decrease or an unexpected financial needs arises. Try to put the funds in an investment that pays some return and is readily converted to cash for use. Prepaying expenses can build up reserves and help with cash flow the next year.

4. Invest in productive assets. Now may be the time to invest in assets that will significantly improve your operation for the long haul. This may be new facilities or remodeled facilities that could increase your efficiency or your cows productivity. This may also be assets that need to be replaced such as a mixer wagon or tractor. Do not buy an assets because it is new or the latest version. Computers are often a good example of this, as the new version does not supply any more information for your use.

This is an opportunity to look to the future. The first priority should be to reduce debt. This will free cash flow for operating expenses as prices go down. To make good decisions you need good information. Financial management is as important as production management for the long term survival of your dairy operation. Take advantage of this opportunity.

Herd	Test Day Average										Yearly Average					
	County	Br.	Mo.	Cows	% Days in Milk	Milk			Fat			Milk	Fat		Protein	
						Milk	%	Lbs.	%	Lbs.	%		Lbs.	%	Lbs.	
Coastal Plain Exp Station	81-00	J	8	17	94	58.6	5.0	2.91	20413	5.0	1013	20413	5.0	1013	3.5	713
Anthony Brothers	75-00	H	7	1127	86	66.0	3.9	2.55	26027	3.5	902	26027	3.5	902	2.9	753
Invin R Yoder	53-05	H	8	153	90	64.8	3.7	2.41	25656	3.7	941	25656	3.7	941	3.1	801
Coastal Plain Exp Station	81-00	H	8	215	83	60.5	3.9	2.34	26206	3.9	1016	26206	3.9	1016	3.0	775
Troy Yoder	53-06	H	7	149	89	59.0	3.9	2.31	23203	3.8	887	23203	3.8	887	3.1	722
J. Everett Williams	59-00	H	8	737	84	59.4	3.6	2.13	25860	3.7	956	25860	3.7	956	3.0	785
Dave Clark	59-01	H	8	805	88	65.5	3.2	2.10	26087	3.6	935	26087	3.6	935	2.9	766
Robert Paul Yoder	53-05	H	8	70	74	48.8	3.7	1.81	19919	3.5	694	19919	3.5	694	3.1	617
Doug Chambers	47-00	H	7	307	79	46.8	3.8	1.77	19911	3.6	713	19911	3.6	713	3.1	618
Jerry Gilbert	59-01	H	8	181	90	43.4	4.1	1.77	17998	3.9	697	17998	3.9	697	3.1	550
Kent Walker	36-05	H	8	105	88	48.0	3.7	1.76	21538	3.7	794	21538	3.7	794	2.9	620
Cecil Dueck	44-75	H	8	60	92	46.7	3.7	1.75	23174	3.6	834	23174	3.6	834	3.0	705
Copelan	67-06	H	7	52	69	36.5	4.7	1.72	17919	4.6	825	17919	4.6	825	3.1	553
Rodgers' Hillcrest Farms Inc.	52-05	H	7	356	81	52.3	3.3	1.71	21118	3.6	767	21118	3.6	767	3.0	639
Chris Yoder Jr.	53-05	H	8	143	87	48.8	3.5	1.69	17856	3.5	630	17856	3.5	630	3.1	550
Ricky Williams	01-00	H	8	577	94	46.9	3.6	1.69	19792	3.4	682	19792	3.4	682	2.8	548
Louis Yoder	53-06	H	8	126	87	48.7	3.4	1.68	21785	3.3	723	21785	3.3	723	3.1	669
Jeff Yoder	53-05	H	8	108	85	51.2	3.3	1.67	18418	3.1	564	18418	3.1	564	3.0	560
Larry L Holdeman	44-05	H	8	71	83	47.0	3.6	1.67	21745	3.6	788	21745	3.6	788	3.1	679
Franks Farm	10-00	H	8	39	85	52.6	3.1	1.65	19573	3.5	689	19573	3.5	689	3.1	605

¹Minimum herd size of 10 cows. Yearly average calculated after 365 days on test. (Mo.) column indicates month of test. Test day milk, marked with an asterisk (*), indicates herd was milked three times per day (3X).

TOP 20 DHIA HERDS BY TEST DAY FAT PRODUCTION

Herd	County	Br.	Mo.	Cows	% Days in Milk	Test Day Average				Yearly Average			
						Milk	%	Lbs.	Fat	Milk	%	Lbs.	Protein
Coastal Plain Exp Station	81-00	J	9	18	94	54.3	5.4	2.94	20723	5.0	1032	3.5	724
Krulic Dairy Farm, Inc.	72-00	X	8	32	94	60.3	4.1	2.47	23918	4.0	953	3.3	784
Krulic Dairy Farm, Inc.	72-00	H	8	92	92	64.6	3.7	2.41	24944	3.6	887	3.0	745
J. Everett Williams	59-00	H	9	728	84	63.0	3.8	2.38	25820	3.7	951	3.0	785
Coastal Plain Exp Station	81-00	H	9	213	80	56.5	4.1	2.30	26285	3.9	1026	3.0	778
Scott Glover	92-05	H	9	88	81	57.0	3.9	2.25	24716	3.6	901	3.0	731
Krulic Dairy Farm, Inc.	72-00	H	9	89	94	63.1	3.5	2.21	24928	3.6	888	3.0	743
Anthony Brothers	75-00	H	9	1133	83	55.2	3.8	2.08	25908	3.5	910	2.9	747
Irvin R. Yoder	53-05	H	9	152	80	55.0	3.8	2.07	25591	3.7	947	3.1	800
Krucic Dairy Farm, Inc.	72-00	X	9	32	81	53.6	3.9	2.07	23627	4.0	942	3.3	772
Dairy Production Systems-GA	68-02	H	9	3834	85	55.5	3.6	2.02	21135	3.6	754	3.0	639
Godbee Farms	45-00	X	9	56	93	45.5	4.4	1.99	15287	4.1	633	3.4	516
Larry L Holdeman	44-05	H	9	84	94	50.2	3.9	1.94	22164	3.7	811	3.1	692
Williams Dairy	77-00	H	9	131	92	54.8	3.5	1.93	22288	3.5	789	3.1	692
B&S Dairy	93-05	H	9	538	89	53.4	3.6	1.91	21692				
Beaverdam Farm L.L.C	40-00	H	9	160	91	48.2	3.9	1.89	18389	3.8	706	3.1	578
Dave Clark	59-01	H	9	911	81	55.5	3.4	1.86	25963	3.6	927	2.9	763
Godbee Farms	45-00	J	9	73	92	39.5	4.7	1.86	14342	4.3	617	3.6	513
Ray Ward Dairy	67-00	H	9	144	84	50.8	3.6	1.83	23362	3.7	866	2.9	674
Lee Whitaker	52-05	H	9	190	86	50.4	3.6	1.82	22274	3.4	751	3.1	697

¹Minimum herd size of 10 cows. Yearly average calculated after 365 days on test. (Mo.) column indicates month of test. Test day milk, marked with an asterisk (*), indicates herd was milked three times per day (3X).

Information in this table is compiled from Dairy Records Management Systems Reports (Raleigh, NC).

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J. Everett Williams	59-00	H	9	728	84	63.0	3.8	2.38	25820	3.7	951	3.0	785		
Coastal Plain Exp Station	81-00	H	9	213	80	56.5	4.1	2.30	26285	3.9	1026	3.0	778		
Scott Glover	92-05	H	9	88	81	57.0	3.9	2.25	24716	3.6	901	3.0	731		
Krulic Dairy Farm, Inc.	72-00	H	9	89	94	63.1	3.5	2.21	24928	3.6	888	3.0	743		
Anthony Brothers	75-00	H	9	1133	83	55.2	3.8	2.08	25908	3.5	910	2.9	747		
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B&S Dairy	93-05	H	9	538	89	53.4	3.6	1.91	21692						
Beaverdam Farm L.L.C	40-00	H	9	160	91	48.2	3.9	1.89	18389	3.8	706	3.1	578		
Dave Clark	59-01	H	9	911	81	55.5	3.4	1.86	25963	3.6	927	2.9	763		
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							%	Lbs.		%	Lbs.		%
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Scott Glover	92-05	H	9	88	81	57.0	3.9	2.25	24716	3.6	901	3.0	731
Krulic Dairy Farm, Inc.	72-00	H	9	89	94	63.1	3.5	2.21	24928	3.6	888	3.0	743
Anthony Brothers	75-00	H	9	1133	83	55.2	3.8	2.08	25908	3.5	910	2.9	747
Irvin R. Yoder	53-05	H	9	152	80	55.0	3.8	2.07	25591	3.7	947	3.1	800
Krulic Dairy Farm, Inc.	72-00	X	9	32	81	53.6	3.9	2.07	23627	4.0	942	3.3	772
Dairy Production Systems-GA	68-02	H	9	3834	85	55.5	3.6	2.02	21135	3.6	754	3.0	639
Godbee Farms	45-00	X	9	56	93	45.5	4.4	1.99	15287	4.1	633	3.4	516
Larry L Holdeman	44-05	H	9	84	94	50.2	3.9	1.94	22164	3.7	811	3.1	692
Williams Dairy	77-00	H	9	131	92	54.8	3.5	1.93	22288	3.5	789	3.1	692
B&S Dairy	93-05	H	9	538	89	53.4	3.6	1.91	21692				
Beaverdam Farm L.L.C	40-00	H	9	160	91	48.2	3.9	1.89	18389	3.8	706	3.1	578
Dave Clark	59-01	H	9	911	81	55.5	3.4	1.86	25963	3.6	927	2.9	763
Godbee Farms	45-00	J	9	73	92	39.5	4.7	1.86	14342	4.3	617	3.6	513
Ray Ward Dairy	67-00	H	9	144	84	50.8	3.6	1.83	23362	3.7	866	2.9	674
Lee Whitaker	52-05	H	9	190	86	50.4	3.6	1.82	22274	3.4	751	3.1	697

¹Minimum herd size of 10 cows. Yearly average calculated after 365 days on test. (Mo.) column indicates month of test. Test day milk, marked with an asterisk (*), indicates herd was milked three times per day (3X).

Information in this table is compiled from Dairy Records Management Systems Reports (Raleigh, NC).