

# DAIRYQUEST NEWS

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## Monitoring Feed Usage

By Lee Mc Cauley

Feed is the highest cost when it comes to producing milk. With the rising costs of feeds, we have been researching a means to help you monitor feed usage. We have looked at competitor products that are available and attempted to think "out-of-the-box" and design something unique to the industry.

If you have hired help that is mixing your rations you likely have pondered at some point "Is this person mixing the ration correctly?". You may have also wondered what your true feed costs are per pound of milk produced.

In order to evaluate if a person is mixing feed correctly and to know your feed costs per cwt. of milk, one must know the correct ration compared to how many pounds of each ingredient actually got mixed.

One product currently available will send a radio signal from your scale head to a desktop computer with actual amounts of each ingredient fed. Others allow you to store the information in a "key" and then transfer the key to a computer program. These systems run from \$7000 - \$17,000 as a one time fee to \$1000 per month.

We want to design something that:

1. Has a lower cost than our competition.
2. Is easy to gather the feed amounts
3. Allows DairyQuest to communicate with it.
4. Is easy for you to evaluate accuracy of mixing and obtain feed cost/lb milk.

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The solution: Use a rugged Tablet PC to control the scale head on your mixer.

Using Blue Tooth Technology (wireless) the Tablet PC would control the scale head. A feed monitoring software program on the Tablet would know the correct ration for each pen of animals. As each ingredient is fed into the mixer the Tablet PC would save the amount of each ingredient placed into the mix. The user would simply start and stop the feed monitoring software on the Tablet.

This makes it easy to gather the precise amount of each ingredient placed into the mixer. The actual amount fed are then transferred electronically to a program on your desktop computer. This satisfies #2.

DairyQuest would be able to directly access all of the rations fed. Since DairyQuest contains what animals are in each string/pen and the milk for each animal, we can obtain feed costs/lb milk. This satisfies #3 and part of #4.

A desktop feed monitoring program will allow you to compare the correct ration to the actual ration fed. This satisfies #4.

Now the big question. How much will this cost? Well, our Tablet PC is \$3600. That includes

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everything that you will need to connect to your scale head. Currently, we are thinking that the software to communicate with the scale head and evaluate the ration data will run between \$200 – \$400 per year. This satisfies #1.

The Tablet PC could also be used to run other applications. Since it has Windows XP as it's operating system, any program that you run on your desktop computer can be run on the Tablet PC.

DairyQuest Mobile is ideal for a Tablet PC and is now being sold and used throughout the country. If you are looking for a means to handle more

## Event Summary

Whenever you save an event in DairyQuest, you will quickly see the event listed in the event window. For instance, when you save a fresh event on a cow, you will see the event listed below the data entry screen of the fresh event.

When looking at the event in the list, you will see three items. Event Kind, date of the event and a summary of the event.

Many of you may not realize that you can change what the summary of the event contains. For example, on a fresh event your summary might list the calf ID and the fate of the calf.

To change what your event summary looks like go to Preferences|Interface|Event Summary on the Main Menu. This will bring up a screen that will

cattle in less time, DairyQuest Mobile is the right software program for you.

We are currently developing the software for feed monitoring. If you are interested in testing the software, please notify us. If you have suggestions for us, again feel free to contact us. We are always open to them.

As soon as we have the programs ready we will notify you.

allow you to easily design the summary.

Using your mouse, select the event that you want to change by clicking on it near the bottom of the window. Let's use Freshening as an example.

On the right side you might see that the Calf ID 1 and Calf Fate 1 are the only Event Fields Used. You will see on the left side under Available Event Fields all of the fields that could be used in the summary. Simply click on the ones that you want included in the summary and click the Add button.

To change the order of the Items in the summary, click on an item under Event Fields Used and click the Up or Down button.

You can change or turn off the captions for the item in the summary. For Calf ID 1 you can change the Caption to #1 if you want to. That way you can get more items to show up in the summary. You can even turn the Captions off by Unchecking "Use Captions in Summary" box.

*To err is human, but to really  
foul things up requires a  
computer. ~Farmer's  
Almanac, 1978*

## DairyQuest Tips

Have you ever had a cow that you wanted to show up on the Vet Check Report that was not scheduled for a Vet Check? Maybe she had an abscess or injury but was not scheduled for a Vet Check for she was pregnant.

Hopefully, this situation does not happen very often. But when it does, it would be nice to “force” DairyQuest into printing her on the Vet Check Report so that you do not forget about her.

To do so involves a couple of easy steps. Click on the Cow Head Icon and locate the cow by entering her name/number in the ID field above the cow list. Press enter and you will go to her.

Click on Scheduled Events on the left side of the screen. You will then see the events that she is

## New Addition Features

When you open the Vet Check Report (Reports|Scheduling Reports| Vet Check Report) you will notice that it always remembers the date of the last Vet Check. There is now an option located next to the As Of Date where you can default the date upon opening the report, to the current date. This was a feature called for from many of you.

When recording results of a Vet Check using the Vet Check Results Manager (Animals|Vet Check Results Manager) the manager always showed all of the animals scheduled for a Vet Check. You will now notice that you can filter the animals that appear in the Vet Check Results Manager by the type of Vet Check that the animal had.

## New Phone System

Those of you who have called into our office will have noticed a new phone system. Simply select the correct option when requested. We hope that you find this system useful and not annoying. The new system offers us more flexibility in handling calls. For instance, if you call after hours using our toll free number (888-597-2977) the call will automatically directed to a cell phone for after hours support.

scheduled for. In this case, you will not see a Vet Check scheduled, but you should see a Dry Off and Fresh Event Scheduled.

Select Vet Check as the Event Type in the Event Type Field. Enter the date that you want to schedule her for.

For the Reason of the Vet Check, select Manager Request. Click the save button.

The cow will now show up on the Vet Check Report provided that the date of the scheduled event that you created is less than or equal to the the date of the actual Vet Check.

This can allow for more rapid entry of Vet Check Results.

The Events Listing Report (Reports|Herd Master Reports|Event Listing Reports) used to print all events for an animal based on a date range. You now can control which type of events will be printed.

Click the “Select Events To Print” button and check the events that you want to print. Printing this report for DHI Technicians is common.

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