

# HEIFERPRO NEWS

ProfitSource, 14058 County Road F, Athens, WI 54411  
www.heiferpro.com info@heiferpro.com 888-597-2977

## Monitoring Feed Usage

By Lee Mc Cauley

Feed is the highest cost when it comes to raising heifers. 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.

We realize how uncomfortable it is to discuss raising your prices to your customers. We are going to directly address this with hopes that it can help build your relationship with your customers. We hope to make it easier for you to talk to them about raising your rates. How? You will be able to provide accurate feeding data based upon actual ingredients fed.

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 might have a “wish list” that includes the ability to charge a “feeding rate” in HeiferPRO.

In order to evaluate if a person is mixing feed correctly and to charge feed costs to a customer, 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 –

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\$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 HeiferPRO to communicate with it.
4. Is easy for you to evaluate accuracy of mixing and obtain actual fee costs that you can charge on an invoice.

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 amounts fed are then transferred electronically to a program on your desktop computer. This satisfies #2.

## Monitor Feed – Cont.

HeiferPRO would be able to directly access all of the rations fed. Since HeiferPRO knows what animals are in each location, we can obtain feed costs per animal and create a new billing rate for feeding. 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 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

## Previous Billing Rate

If you have installed the latest version of HeiferPRO, you will see a notice explaining how you can charge a previous billing rate and a new billing rate at the same time. This allows you to help “sell” your customers on increasing your Flat Rate per day on newly received animals only.

This pertains to a Flat Rate per Day only billing rate. In the future we will be adding this feature to the other types of billing rates.

Go to Preferences|Billing Rates. Click on a your Flat Rate Per Day Rate in the window. You will see under the Flat Rate Charge Section your Current

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.

HeiferPRO 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 cattle in less time, HeiferPRO 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.

Rate, Current Rate Begin Date and the Previous Rate.

Here is an example on how to use this. Let's say that your current rate is \$1.50 and you want to go to \$1.75. You would enter \$1.75 as your current rate and \$1.50 as the previous rate. In the Current Rate Begin Date you would enter the date that you want the new current rate to begin. This date will be compared to the Receive Action Date to determine whether to use the Current Rate or the Previous Rate.

If you have any questions regarding this change to HeiferPRO, feel free to contact us.

## Congratulations to Dan Miller of Spring Valley, MN!

Dan, a HeiferPRO user, won our door prize, a 120GB external hard drive at the Calf & Heifer Conference in Rochester, MN.

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

## New Billing Rates

Again, those of you who have installed the latest version of HeiferPRO will be notified of new billing rates. These rates have been requested by customers.

The first new rate is Age at Receive. This differs tremendously from the Rate by Age billing rate.

With the new Age at Receive Rate, you can charge a rate based upon the animals age when it is received onto your operation. This rate will stay with the animal for the entire time that it is on your operation.

The Rate by Age billing rate allows you to charge a different rate as the animal becomes older while on your operation.

This rate should be used if you have a customer who sends you animals with a wide range of ages. Let's say that you usually raise calves for a customer from 1 day old to just prior to freshening. You are charging a flat rate per day that is based upon this. However, now this same customer sends you a heifer that weighs 700 lbs. That just isn't fair to you. Now you have a means to charge correctly.

The other new rate is called Weight at Receive. It is very similar to the Age at Receive. It is very different from the Rate by Weight billing rate.

With the new Weight at Receive, you can charge a rate based upon the animal's weight when it is received onto your operation. This rate will stay with the animal for the entire time that it is on your operation.

The Rate by Weight billing rate allows you to charge a different rate as the animal becomes larger.

Use this rate if you are able to weigh animals upon arrival and you have a customer who is not providing accurate birth dates.

If you have any logical suggestions for billing rates please forward them on to us. With the rapidly changing marketplace, we are sure that there will be more new billing rates in the future.

## New Additional Features

There are 2 new additional fields available on a Sold Action. They are "Sold To" and "Sold Destination". This will make it easier to do a report on listing animals that were sold to a specific customer.

There is a new preference setting for a Receive Action. Click Preferences|All Preferences|Actions and you will see "Auto Repeat Birth Date on Receive Action". If this is checked, HeiferPRO will automatically use the previously recorded birth date on when recording a Receive Action.

On the Dairy Statistics Report, you can now select the Lot that you recorded on a Receive Action as a Filter item.

Please contact us if you have any questions.

## 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.

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**ProfitSource LLC**

14058 County Road F  
Athens, WI  
54452

**Phone:**

888-597-2977

**Fax:**

888-597-2977

**E-Mail:**

**info@goprofitsource.com**

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*Visit us at:*

[www.heiferpro.com](http://www.heiferpro.com)

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