The DataGene Herd Test Dashboard

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Abstract

Data from milk recording is central to Australia's genetic evaluation system which generates Australian Breeding Values (ABVs) and indices (eg BPI, TWI, HWI). About 46% of Australian dairy farmers herd test and it is in the Australian dairy industry's interest to maintain this rate to ensure the continued accuracy of ABVs and indices.
One of the reasons farmers don't milk record (or cease milk recording) is the view that they don't get enough value out of the results. Milk recording results typically provide detailed information about individual cows. However, the data can be used as a powerful management tool when it is collated to provide a picture of what's happening at a herd level, or to groups of cows. The DataGene Herd Test Dashboard has been designed to fill this gap by reporting on current performance and trends at the herd level. Better management of herd health will help maintain the Australian dairy industry's reputation for milk quality and animal welfare.
DataGene's Herd Test Dashboard is a new report for farmers who milk record. It provides a picture of what's happening at the herd level with overviews of a number of key metrics, both within herd health and herd composition.
The report was created through the collaboration of a large number of Australian dairy organisations and individuals including Dairy Australia, Milk Recording companies, veterinarians, farm consultants and funding bodies. Algorithms for the calculation of values in the report have been developed by leading Australian veterinarians, and computer programming was completed in house at DataGene.
The report provides a herd level summary focusing on trends for indicators of mastitis, acidosis, ketosis and fertility. It also provides a snapshot of the current herd composition, as well as a list of 'alert cows' with explanatory text to help the user better understand the results.
All Australian Data Processing Centres have implemented the report, and it can be automatically supplied with milk recording results, as well as being requested on an ad-hoc basis.
The Herd Test Dashboard enables Australian dairy farmers to get more value out of the time and effort they invest in milk recording by identifying and minimising hidden costs in their dairy herd associated with mastitis, fertility and acidosis/ketosis, and then following up alerts on individual cows and a herd level with their vets, nutritionists and advisors.

Keywords: milk recording, dashboard, report, herd health