

DHIA OFFERS HERD PERFORMANCE BENCHMARKING TOOL

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DHIA has provided a performance recordkeeping program for dairy farmers in Kentucky for about eighty years. With the reports on individual cows and the whole herd the herdowner or manager was provided with information on which to base many management decisions. For almost twenty years herdowners have had the option of the use of a personal computer for entering data, receiving updated data files and generating internal herd reports. Now, the Dairy Records Management System (DRMS) in Raleigh, N.C. has developed a web-based tool to allow individual producers enrolled in DHIA to compare their herd to other herds for a wide variety of performance variables. They can, as they say, do it from the comfort of their computer desk.

The program is called DairyMetrics. The program allows the user to compare their herd to other herds that meet the criteria they select and to display the comparisons for whatever performance variables are of interest. All that is required is to own a personal computer with access to the Internet. There is a monthly fee of \$5 which permits the user unlimited access to DairyMetrics for that month. Comparison groups can be selected from among almost 14000 herds that have their DHIA records processed by DRMS. Individual criterion can be selected from five classifications: general, production, udder health, reproduction and genetics. Common groupings might include breed, state or region of the country, herd size and herd milk production level. Each report contains the result for the selected herd and the comparison group for each variable in the database contained in the five classifications. In addition to the average for each variable for the comparison group, the values for the lowest and highest herds are also given.

Graphs are also available for each variable summarized in the comparison. The graphs are displayed for the current month, the recent year trend and the five-year trend. To obtain more detailed information on DairyMetrics and example reports and graphs visit the DRMS website www.drms.org or contact me at 859-257-7540 or amcallis@uky.edu.