



Royal Jersey Agricultural & Horticultural Society

PATRON: HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN

18/06/08

Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel
Scrutiny Office
Morier House
Halkett Place
St Helier
JE1 1DD

Submission to the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel Re. Procedures for Milk Recording in Jersey

Dear Deputy Ryan

Following the open meeting held the other night at the Town Hall I have been asked to supply your panel with further information relating to the milk recording programme carried out on all herds owned by the now 29 recognized milk producing farms and further to this supply your panel with evidence in support, or otherwise, of comments raised during the meeting regarding production levels on individual farms, namely Classic Herd Ltd and the Island herd as a whole.

For a number of years the UK Company, National Milk Records PLC, has carried out an independent milk recording and herd management function for all registered producers. The level of service supplied to local farms requires independent 'milk recorder' assistance in recording both milk samples taken for compositional and health analysis and animal event data collection. The presence of an independent recorder importantly adds greater validity to the resultant information supplied by the programme.

For some years milk recording staff were supplied by the Department of Agriculture & Fisheries yet since 2003, when the responsibility for the supply of the service transferred to the RJA&HS, Society employees fulfill this role. In both incidences previously DAF and now the RJA&HS act as an equivalent to a NMR County Area Office working to NMR rules supported by international procedures set by ICAR (International Committee for Animal Records) and I act as the Area Field Manager.

I have supplied as appendices, supporting documentation downloaded from the NMR user's website in relation to some of the technical terms used.

Observations required to substantiate claims made by Classic Herd Ltd are set out over the following pages.

Introduction: The details published each year by NMR in their annual report for each breed group (Appendix item 2 – Island Jersey Top Herds* - see after appendix, pg 4) uses only information satisfying that required for ‘Qualifying Lactations’. (The following description of a qualifying lactation can be found within the NMR Definition of Terms)

- **Qualifying Lactation** – For a lactation to qualify for consideration for inclusion in the Annual Production Report the animal must:
 - a. Calve in the same herd where the lactation is completed or enter the herd within four days of calving
 - b. Remain in-milk in the same herd for at least 200 days from calving
 - c. Have a minimum of five recordings with actual sample tests included in the *Lactation Period*
 - d. Have completed her *Lactation Period* within the *Recording Year*

It is possible to influence the figures published within the Annual Report, both unintentionally and intentionally, through a number of actions, some are general within the wider dairy industry whilst others are peculiar to the local dairy industry.

1. Cease recording poorer yielding cows before they complete a 200 day lactation by advising the recorder the animal is no longer in milk.
2. Sell cows to another producer who may or may not use the same service provider (UK only). However there is some limited movement of cows locally between some farms each year as the milk licensing year draws to a close. Herds which are over production may lease cows to a producer who is under production creating the effect of a producer drying off cows earlier than would normally be the case.
3. Time restricted ability for those selling cull cows into the local meat market by slaughtering suitable animals at the optimum time.
4. Individual farm management systems and how each herd manages milking herd replacements. A herd seeking to more rapidly improve milk yield at the expense of overall farm profitability in the short term may instigate a much higher culling rate, increasing the rate of turnover and reducing completed lactations.
5. With 24 hours notice of a recorded milking being required, including scheduling of all farms to a monthly recording cycle, it is possible to turn the actual recording day into a 26 hour day by bringing forward the time of the morning milking prior to the actual recording and delaying by one hour from the norm the following morning milking.

Any of these actions could distort the published figures from actual on-farm production, usually by eliminating poorer individual cow records. Historically, top producing herds published within the Annual Report, for all areas including Jersey Island, tend to have a greater discrepancy between Qualifying Lactations and Whole Herd yields. Whole Herd yields take into account production from all cows contributing to that year’s total yield for that farm and are often a better indicator of actual average production within a herd.

Factors specific to Classic Herd Ltd

In August 2004 the Classic Herd (Herd '009) held a partial dispersal sale at which a large portion of the herds milking cattle were sold. This had a dramatic effect on the herd's qualifying lactation production in the following year's 2005 report. Since 2005 the Classic herd has been in organic conversion – organic herds would normally yield lower than conventional herds on otherwise comparative systems.

2004 Report: 4,984 kgs milk from 115 qualifying cows

2005 Report: 6,114 kgs milk from 38 qualifying cows

2006 Report: n/a when completing this document

2007 Report: 5,094 kgs milk from 64 qualifying cows

I am in no doubt that Classic Herd Ltd only broke through the 6,000 Kg barrier in 2005 due to the effect of the large number of animals which left the herd in August 2004, added to which Classic Herd retained the majority of their better production cattle.

Regarding current production levels, the monthly recording processes for the past few months do indicate that Classic Herd Ltd may reach in 2008 a similar production level to 2005, however there are two further factors that need to be considered.

1. At every recording for all farms our field staff record the yield of milk, as measured by the Jersey Dairy tanker driver, taken from the bulk tank the previous day. Should there be a discrepancy greater than an internationally approved percentage between 'all milk produced' and 'milk sent to dairy' the NMR area office is sent a notification to check test that herd at the forthcoming recording. Check testing involves returning to the farm the day after the actual recording, without prior notice, to record all animals for a second consecutive day. Since Classic Herd Ltd ceased sending milk to Jersey Dairy it has not been possible to monitor this correlation.
2. Since the transfer of the management of the milk recording service to the Society no herds check tested since 2003, including Classic Herd Ltd, have proven to be outside the parameters at the second recording.

I hope this document goes some way to supplying relevant background information relating to the comments made by Classic Herd Ltd both at the Town Hall meeting and previously.

Yours faithfully



David Hambrook
NMR Area Office Manager

Appendix:

Item 1 below shows two functions; the first being a %age differential, by herd, of the number of cows contributing to the qualifying lactation records as compared to the 100% contributing to whole herd production. The second column shows the actual production of the qualifying lactation records for each herd, as a percentage of the whole herd records.

Example:

Herd '016 – La Ferme Ltd

Cows with qualifying records: 252 (producing an average of 5,103 kgs per cow)

Cows in whole herd record: 263 (producing an average of 5,040 kgs per cow)

252 cows = 96% of 263

5,103 kgs = 101% of 5,040 kgs

Table Item 1

2007 - All JI herds with over 25 cows recorded Ranked by cow numbers differential		
Herd No.	%age differential cow numbers	%age differential milk yield (Kgs)
025	71	113
027	77	113
009	82	110
007	83	112
019	84	109
017	86	106
026	87	105
008	88	106
024	88	104
003	89	104
037	89	100
032	89	104
001	92	102
046	93	105
028	93	102
012	93	103
036	95	103
023	95	103
016	96	101
013	97	103
031	98	101
042	100	100

There were a number of cow transfers between the herds ranked 1st and 6th which would have caused their figures to be distorted downwards from the norm.

** The NMR Annual Report only prints as a matter of course the highest 1% of herds and individual animals for each breed group. For Jersey Island this would mean just one herd being recognised within the Annual Report. For the 2006/07 recording year NMR has published those herds which achieved a Fat + Protein yield above the 'breed group' average. Top herds are recognised by the combined weight of butterfat and protein produced by the animal, not the volume of milk. Invariably production of component solids is a better indicator of profitability, especially within the Jersey breed in the British Isles.*

NMR Leading Herds (Production) 2007

Jersey

Herd Owner	Scheme	Q Lacts Q Heif	Calv Index	Milk kg	Fat %	Protein %	Fat kg	Protein kg	F+P kg	PIN Herd PIN Heif	No. Est	PIN £*
Island Jersey												
Lodge Farm Limited	A4	205	371	5076	5.41	3.83	274	194	468	205	2	8
C/O M P Houze Esq The Lodge		53		4148	5.37	3.79	223	157	380	53		5
Mr T H Barette	A4	135	403	5055	5.46	3.77	276	191	467	135		1
Home Farm La Rue Es Abbes		28		4377	5.53	3.77	242	165	407	28		2
Trinity Manor Farm Ltd	A4	148	395	5223	5.10	3.75	266	196	462	147		5
C/O The Farm Manager Trinity Manor		33		4321	5.12	3.76	221	162	383	33		3
Classic Herd Limited	A4	64	392	5094	5.09	3.96	259	202	461	63	1	11
Manor Farm		24		4321	5.15	3.97	223	172	395	23	1	2
R H T Smith	A4	15	392	4910	5.53	3.84	272	188	460	15		-2
Laugee Farm La Grande Route Du Mont-A`-Labbe		2		4021	5.34	3.78	215	152	367	2		12
Mr G P Romeril	A4	13	453	5184	4.97	3.84	258	199	457	13		-3
Rock Place		3		4178	4.79	3.88	200	162	362	3		-6
La Ferme Ltd	A4	252	377	5103	5.18	3.75	264	191	455	250	15	17
La Ferme		87		4566	5.22	3.72	238	170	408	87	10	15
Mr D Le Sech	A4	29	393	4969	5.24	3.89	261	193	454	29	1	8
La Fontaine Farm		7		4649	5.11	3.80	238	176	414	7		3
Mrs A Mitchell	A4	57	384	5232	4.78	3.76	250	197	447	57		-3
Francheville Manor		8		4589	4.94	3.77	227	173	400	8		7
Les Ormes Farm	A4	59	395	4912	5.19	3.68	255	181	436	59		4
C/O Mr & Mrs C R Cudlipp Rue Du Nord		8		3672	4.84	3.54	178	130	308	8		3
F E Cudlipp	A4	11	425	4443	5.92	3.88	263	172	435	11	1	-21
Dunedin		2		3695	6.32	4.07	234	150	384	2		-17
Le Gresley Farms Ltd	A4	49	460	4795	5.34	3.73	256	179	435	49		-4
Oakwood		10		4133	5.22	3.72	216	154	370	10		-7
Cowley Farm Ltd	A4	173	384	4686	5.26	3.75	246	176	422	173		9
Cowley Farm La Route De Maufant		57		4003	5.37	3.77	215	151	366	57		6
J F Le Feuvre	A4	108	396	4703	5.16	3.80	243	179	422	107		-1
Les Augerez		20		3814	5.05	3.72	193	142	335	19		-7
Mr C R Lee	A4	187	401	4684	5.27	3.72	247	174	421	187		2
La Caroline		32		4221	5.32	3.74	225	158	383	32		-2
Cross Cottage Farm Limited	A4	36	404	4556	5.42	3.83	247	174	421	36		-8
Mr L P Gallichan Les Bouillons Cottage La Rue Des Bouillo		5		4034	5.35	3.74	216	151	367	5		-8