

Dairy Health Management Continuing Education Program

Module 1 Assignment

Introduction

Over the course of the next 12 modules you will be given a series of assignments to complete at home. The general objective of the assignments is to apply the concepts and techniques discussed in the module to your own clients to transform knowledge into applied skills and gain confidence in using your production medicine skills.

The objectives of this assignment are:

- ❑ to explore and apply the mechanics of your herd analysis software and access data to answer questions that you formulate to measure herd performance
- ❑ to distil and summarize overall herd analysis information into a concise report
- ❑ to facilitate a discussion with your clients about their goals and your assessment of their herd performance

Assignment

The following assignment is to be completed for **2 of your herds**.

The general task is to assess overall herd performance in selected key management areas. With respect to herd milk production, reproduction, udder health, and transition cow performance, use herd records to answer the following questions:

- ❑ What is current herd performance?
- ❑ Is performance meeting herd goals or not?
- ❑ Has it changed recently?

Implicit in each question is, "How do you know?" Answers should be quantitative.

Generally, you may calculate, report, and interpret whichever measure(s) of performance that you feel are appropriate.

A couple of specific points:

Production – In addition to whatever DHI or herd milk recording data you analyze, please also compare it with milk pickup records. For at least one date, compare DHI test day and pick-up (DFO, FPLQ, or co-op) milk/cow, and bulk milk fat and protein from the same date.

Disease – if you choose to calculate the incidence of disease (example dystocia, RP, milk fever, DA, clinical mastitis, etc), indicate the time frame and the source of the numerator and denominator for each parameter.

A) Report

Summarize your findings in a report that you could give to your producer. Write up your assessment and interpretations in 2 to 3 pages per herd. It may be useful to include graphs or tables to display information, but these should be included in the space limit if technically possible. Remember that the idea is to summarize performance as concisely as possible in a format that is easily read and understood by your client.

When you have completed your initial assessment of herd records, discuss your findings with the herd manager. In particular, discuss your assessment in relation to their impressions and goals.

Conclude your report by prioritizing areas for further attention.

B) Discussion & Reflection (no more than 1 page)

- I. Whatever measure(s) of performance you choose to report, indicate why you chose them, and comment briefly on the strengths and/or weaknesses of your chosen measure. Point form is encouraged.
- II. Based on your knowledge of the herd and discussion with herd owner or manager, what is the current bottleneck to achievement of the herd's goals of performance (this may be overall or in each area).

The objective of this exercise is to identify areas that may warrant more detailed investigation and intervention. You are welcome to comment on specific management advice that flows from this analysis and discussion, but the point is not to delve deeply into specific problems or their solutions in this report.

Structure and submission

The deadline for submission is June 13, 2017. Please submit electronically, as an e-mail attachment to miltenbu@uoguelph.ca. If you have questions or difficulties getting started, please contact Cynthia (miltenbu@uoguelph.ca).

Please feel free (even encouraged) to discuss the assignment with your program or practice colleagues.