

Minnesota DHIA News

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Happy Milestone Anniversary and a big **Thank You** go out this month to Tom Quist of Center City for his 45 years of service and to Kevin Knoblach of Sauk Centre for his 30 years of service.

Dear Members,

As we turn the calendar toward a new year, many of us find ourselves in that familiar rhythm—sharpening pencils, reviewing budgets, and mapping out the goals that will help our herds and our businesses thrive. It's a season of planning, and with that comes an important reminder: now is the time to schedule and commit to monthly DHIA testing for the year ahead.

I'd like to share a short story you might relate to. Not long ago, I visited with a producer who had thought he'd be money ahead by testing bimonthly. Inevitably, the plan resulted in many cows not tested until 60+ DIM. Their peak production went uncaptured. By fall, he found himself **wondering why some lactation curves looked suspiciously flat, why comparisons between cows weren't ranking animals like they used to, and why his early-lactation ration changes didn't seem to have a clear result.** After a season's worth of frustration, he committed to monthly testing. The difference—he told me—was like turning the barn lights on after dusk. Suddenly, things were clearer, decisions were easier, and **the numbers worked.**



Monthly testing provides clarity, consistency, and confidence. Here's 8 reasons why incorporating DHIA testing into your 2026 plan matters:

1. Capture every cow's peak production

Monthly testing ensures no peak data slips through the cracks. Missing a peak can flatten a lactation curve, making cow-to-cow comparisons less meaningful no matter the stage of lactation.

2. Evaluate fresh cow health by 30 days

A test in the first month is essential for assessing the success of dry cow treatments, monitoring transition diseases, checking fat-protein ratios, and evaluating the diets of dry and early-lactation cows.

3. Understand true peak milk

Regular tests give you a clean, dependable view of peak performance—valuable for both genetic and management decisions.

4. Manage late lactation somatic cell counts

Knowing SCC levels near dry-off helps guide selective dry cow therapy decisions and supports udder health heading into the next lactation.

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5. Evaluate ration changes among pens and DIM groups

When changes are made, monthly results let you see whether the diet is performing as intended across different subsets of the herd.

6. Take regular "Roll Call" of cow placement

Frequent testing helps confirm that cows are in the correct pens—and alerts you early if someone is in the wrong group or missing altogether.

7. Keep up with milk pregnancy testing

Monthly testing supports timely pregnancy confirmation—whether as routine monitoring, early verification, or checking cows at dry-off.

8. Improve record accuracy and reduce office time

Frequent data review means problems are caught earlier, records stay clean, and your time spent sorting out errors (and the costs that come with them) is greatly reduced.

As you finalize your goals and budgets for the coming year, I encourage you to set aside room—both financially and on the calendar—for monthly DHIA testing. It’s one of the most straightforward steps you can take to strengthen herd performance, streamline management, and support better decisions all year long.

If you’d like help scheduling or tailoring a testing plan that fits your operation, our team is ready and eager to assist.

Warm regards,
Amy Loeschke, General Manager

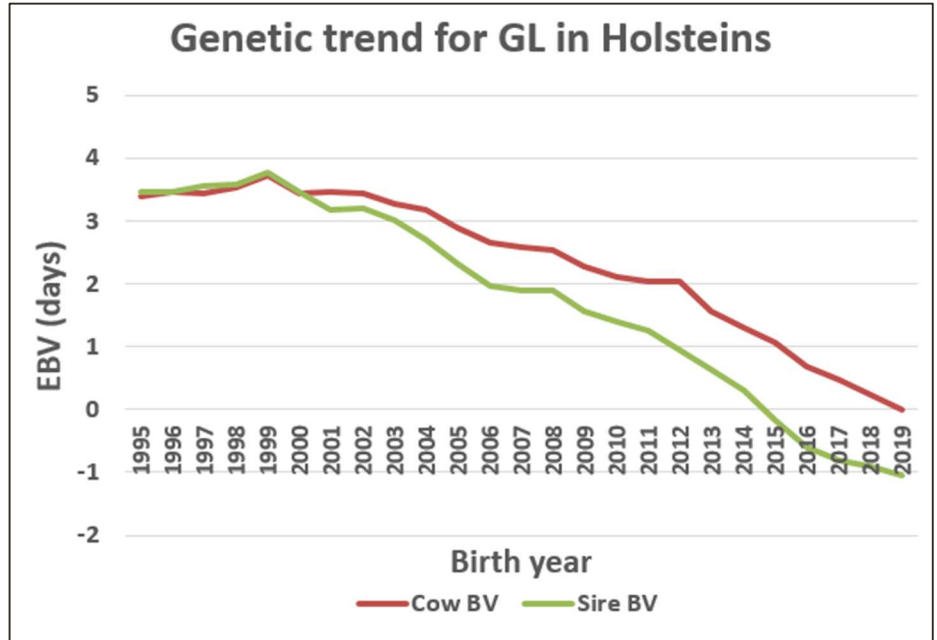
Gestation Length is Revised, both in Reports and for Dart users

The typical gestation length (GL) for dairy cattle ranges from 279 to 287 days, although genetic, breed, and some management factors have the potential to cause variation. The baseline GLs have been in use for almost 30 years. It’s problematic because genetics and herd management have reduced GL by roughly 3 days for Holsteins (Figure-right) and similarly for Brown Swiss in 25 years. Certain European breeds and beef breeds also warrant adjustment for their especially long GL when used for crossbreeding.

The variation within a herd can be large. With a standard deviation of +/- 5 days, at least a third of the herd misses their predicted calving date by 5 days or more. The result can make transition pen sizing difficult and be detrimental to transition health and future productivity because dry periods are too short or too long.

An important role of the herd management software and reports is helping farm staff to schedule dry-off dates and predicted calving dates. **Your records that are processed at DRMS now use new formulas that consider the cow’s breed, service sire breed, and breeding values for GL to better predict calving date.** Prior to the October 2025 change, about 70% of cows calved earlier than projected. Now the distribution between early- and late-calving cows is 50:50—the balance we expect. Further, overall variation is reduced, and **6% more cows are now within ±4 days of their predicted due date after the change (71.4%) compared to before (65.5%).**

Note: All reports from DRMS now use the adjustment, as does information from Dart 8.7 and higher. However, unprocessed data and those from other software could show different predicted dates.



January Milk Quality Leaders, ranked by SCC then Log SCC

Name	SCC	Cows	Name	SCC	Cows
JOHNSON DAIRY	21	26	COUNTY LINE DAIRY LLC	84	182
SCOTCH PRAIRIE FARM	23	7	EMPIRE FARMS	84	33
*JIM AND MARY EVANS	27	7	RADIL FARMS L	85	118
BURKE DAIRY INC	36	195	ST.PAUL DAIRY	85	82
PINE-VUE FARMS	38	103	NEW-VUE AYRSHIRES	85	36
TWIN SPRUCE	40	83	SOLUM HOLSTEINS	86	66
HARMONY HILLS DAIRY	40	56	STELTER HOLSTEIN DAIRY	87	285
*DENNIS AND WAYNE WOLTERS	41	148	KOLTES DAIRY LLC	88	136
PAUL SCHILLING	42	57	*BERNARD MANDERFELD	89	115
GLEN-D-HAVEN HOLSTIENS	43	304	MEYER BROS DAIRY	89	534
LAX-PIETIG DAIRY LLC	51	1103	*TREVOR DICKE	91	104
RKB DAIRY	53	147	HIDDEN HILL DAIRY LLC	91	447
ERICKSONS-NELSON DAIRY	53	65	IMPOLA DAIRY	92	106
BLUE VIEW DAIRY FARM	56	328	*KELLY AND KURTIS RONNINGEN	92	105
MERDAN DAIRY INC	56	79	PRIGGE FARMS LLC	94	314
KRAIG&RACHELLE KRIENKE	57	674	NAMES DAIRY	94	75
KIMM'S DAIRY	58	82	*KENNETH HOFFMAN	94	31
*MARK KLEHR	58	61	MARSHALL KORN	94	57
AUSPICIOUS OYSTER GRANGE	58	161	FRISLE VU	94	46
*GLEN AND BECKY CHRISTEN	59	37	*RODERICK DUESTERHOEFT	97	29
*BILL & ALAN MILLER	61	261	*LOREN & LUKE OLSON	98	42
KUGATH FARMS	62	16	*DEVOINE KRUSE	99	249
SELKE FARMS	63	275	KURTHKINE HOLSTEINS	99	160
TRAIL SIDE HOLSTEINS	64	766	J & A DAIRY	100	506
*ANDY AND LINDA RIEKE	66	52	SCHEFFLER DAIRY	100	189
*PAUL SCHUMACHER	66	81	MIKE & LORI BOESL	101	281
RIISING HEITS	67	13	ANNEXSTAD DAIRY FARMS INC	102	209
*MAYNARD & JEREMY SCHUMACHER	69	128	THISTLE DEW DAIRY	102	138
*SCHLAUDERAFF ENTERPRISE	69	665	HYDE-PARK HOLSTEINS	103	775
RIVER VALLEY DAIRY LLC	69	123	D&L JOHNSON DAIRY FARM	103	240
FUNKS MIDWAY DAIRY	70	847	DICKE CENTURY FARM	103	216
*ANDREW PRIMUS	70	51	FLYINGCOW DAIRY	103	176
WAKE UP DAIRY	73	555	*NICK PRAMANN	103	98
CLARK FARMS,LLC	74	807	*DON AND SALLY WEISENBECK	104	404
DOWN N' DIRTY	74	40	REUTER FARMS	104	136
*KRISTEN REIMAN DUDEN	74	31	*DWIGHT WENGER	104	76
HOEFS' DAIRY	75	281	SUNNY SIDE DAIRY	105	137
RYBERG REG HOLSTEIN	75	49	*FRANCIS & THERESA RYNDA	105	48
REILAND FARMS	77	523	MAYHEW LAKE HOLSTEINS	106	62
SUNSHINE DAIRY LLC	78	98	WALNUT ROW FARM LLC	106	22
SCHULTE FARMS	79	272	WRIGHT WAY DAIRY FARM	106	42
IRISH RIDGE DAIRY LLC	79	68	*NATHAN & BRIDGET GIBBS	107	230
VALLEY VIEW FARM 1	80	133	*DAN SCHANSBERG	108	147
*DEAN HORST	81	82	LOWELL TANGEN	108	178
BROOKSIDE DAIRY	81	534	*RYAN AND MOLLY KAPPERS	108	51
VALLEY ACRES DAIRY	82	973	ZUMBRO VIEW FARMS LLC	109	84
JER-LEY HOLSTEINS	82	36	AARON WIENER	109	78
VOGT DAIRY LLC	83	328	*SCOTT&MICHELLE HERBER	110	793
CHI-LAKES LAND&LIVESTOCK	83	8	HOLKER DAIRY	110	150
WIRTLAND HOLSTEINS	84	525	*DAVID & DONNA ANDERSON	110	43
SCHROEDER BROS LLC	84	157	JEREMY WALKER	110	71