

Minnesota DHIA News

A PUBLICATION OF MINNESOTA DHIA

Volume 26 Issue 1

JANUARY 2026

Minnesota DHIA Annual Meeting – January 29, 2026 – Buffalo, MN

The annual meeting will start with a meal at 12:00 PM. The afternoon program includes the annual report from staff and directors, in addition to time to interact with directors and ask questions.

Unlike the previous annual meetings, we are in a new governance format without elected delegates nor per diems for attendance. All members are welcome, but an RSVP is required by January 26 to be sure we have food and space available. Please email annual meeting reservations to NancyZ@mndhia.org.

Director nominations are open

We are seeking nominations for two open director seats. All seven directors serve at-large under our new governance format. Nominees are required to own or be employed with a member dairy. Directors serve 3-year terms and meet 5-6 times a year. Most meetings are in person and some virtual, depending on farming activity.

Nominations will close on January 20 and elections will be conducted electronically. If you do not receive a notification (email or text) to vote by January 22nd, please contact the office at 763.682.1091. Please email director nominations to NancyZ@mndhia.org or by phone.

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.

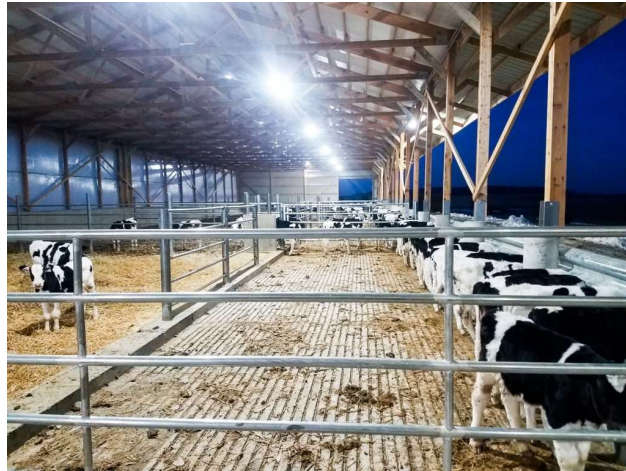
3. Understand true peak milk

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.

(continued next page)



(continued from previous)

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.

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

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.

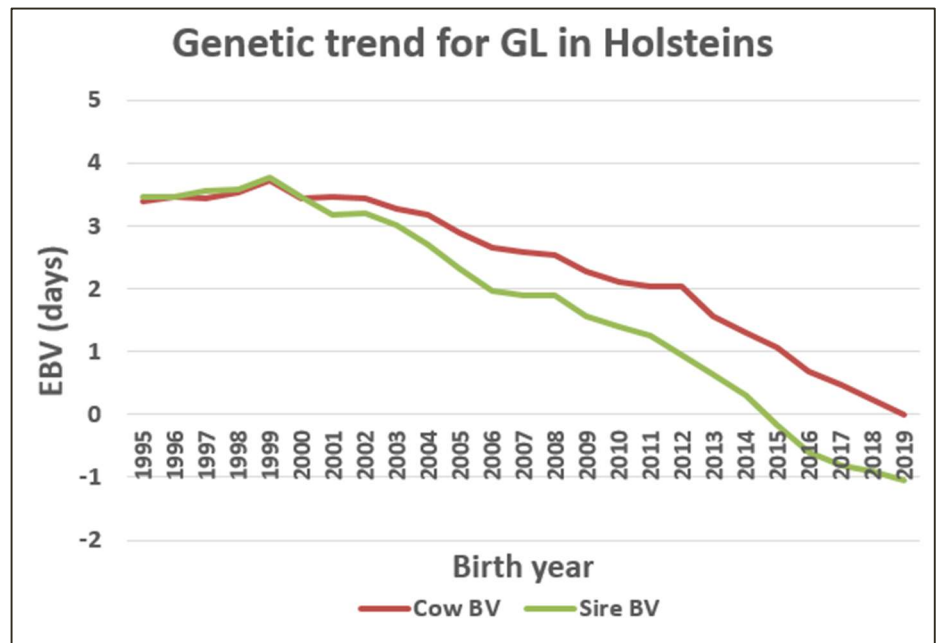
Gestation Length is Revised, both in Reports and for Dart users

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.



December Milk Quality Leaders, raned by SCC then Log SCC

Name	SCC	Cows	Name	SCC	Cows
*GLEN AND BECKY CHRISTEN	28	38	HIGH POINT DAIRY	76	193
TWIN SPRUCE	28	86	SUNSHINE ACRES	76	209
*DENNIS AND WAYNE WOLTERS	29	148	HOEFS' DAIRY	77	280
JOHNSON DAIRY	30	27	*BRIAN AND JULIE LIBBESMEIER	78	58
*MARK KLEHR	34	57	ANNEXSTAD DAIRY FARMS INC	78	211
PINE-VUE FARMS	35	104	WELGRAVEN DAIRY LLC	78	103
JASSEL HOLSTEINS	35	83	*KENNETH HOFFMAN	79	25
*JIM AND MARY EVANS	35	7	*DWIGHT WENGER	79	75
BURKE DAIRY INC	44	199	HYDE-PARK HOLSTEINS	81	780
FLYINGCOW DAIRY	44	177	*DUANE&KAREN TIMM	81	110
KIMM'S DAIRY	45	81	SONNEK FARMS	82	115
GLEN-D-HAVEN HOLSTIENS	46	301	HOUDEK DAIRY LLC	83	546
DNA FARMS INC	46	85	LOWELL TANGEN	83	176
*BILL & ALAN MILLER	48	266	NAMES DAIRY	84	78
ERICKSONS DAIRY	51	64	*BOB & KAYLIE GRUBER	85	305
*PAUL SCHUMACHER	51	81	VALLEY ACRES DAIRY	87	996
*JEREMY BEYER	52	39	SUNNY SIDE DAIRY	87	134
KARA-KESH HOLSTEINS	52	5	D&L JOHNSON DAIRY FARM	89	241
RYBERG REG HOLSTEIN	53	52	*RAY AND CHERYL SEIBERT	89	77
SELKE FARMS	54	270	MICHEL'S BROTHERS	89	37
GEHL ACRES FARM	54	142	IRISH RIDGE DAIRY LLC	90	66
HAPPKE HOLSTEIN FARM	56	114	*FRANCIS & THERESA RYNDA	90	50
SCHROEDER BROS LLC	56	160	*KYLE MOSER	90	143
*TIMOTHY A. STOLTMAN	56	65	SCHEFFLER DAIRY	91	187
HEINTZ BADGER VALLEY FARM	57	178	PAUL SCHILLING	91	53
HARMONY HILLS DAIRY	58	57	*SCHLAUDERAFF ENTERPRISE	92	658
LAX-PIETIG DAIRY LLC	59	1093	*RONALD & ANN BORASH	92	44
*TREVOR DICKE	61	102	RISING HEITS	92	13
KUECHLE DAIRY	62	242	MARSHALL KORN	93	57
DELBERT BECHTOLD	62	34	*MICHAEL DALQUIST	94	31
*MATT BERKTOLD	62	209	RADIL FARMS L	95	120
AUSPICIOUS OYSTER GRANGE	62	167	SANDHILL DAIRY	95	345
RIVER VALLEY DAIRY LLC	62	121	*SCOTT&MICHELLE HERBER	97	772
*MATTHEW BEDNAR	65	61	STELTER HOLSTEIN DAIRY	97	285
*MAREN & JEREMY HOLST	66	123	*MICHAEL & KACIE KURTH	98	104
REILAND FARMS	67	527	DAHRING DAIRY FARM	100	57
TRAIL SIDE HOLSTEINS	67	761	STELLING FARMS	100	313
KRAIG&RACHELLE KRIENKE	68	668	GAR-LIN DAIRY FARMS INC.	101	2060
RKB DAIRY	68	146	CO-JO DAIRY	101	1127
*CORY AND KRISTEN SALZL	68	19	BLUE VIEW DAIRY FARM	102	321
MEYER BROS DAIRY	69	535	BITZAN BOVINES	102	67
CANC	69	60	HEUSINKVELD FARMS	102	518
CLARK FARMS,LLC	70	803	*RODERICK DUESTERHOEFT	102	29
WIRTLAND HOLSTEINS	71	529	*NICK + DENNIS TATGE	103	267
*JOE WUETHRICH	71	27	*NATHAN & BRIDGET GIBBS	104	229
DOWN N' DIRTY	71	30	BERANEK BROTHERS LLP	104	194
WALTER BROS FARM	72	475	JER-LEY HOLSTEINS	104	36
SHERDALE FARMS	72	59	BROOKSIDE DAIRY	105	516
*DAN BRASCH	72	21	*RANDY WAGNER	105	374
*DARIN WALCHESKI	73	97	JOHN + KARYL DIERSEN	105	202

