Michigan Milk Production 1975 Tested (DHI) vs. Non-Tested Herds
Michigan State University
Cooperative Extension Service
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Issued September 1976
2 pages

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
MSU AG FACTS

Ag Fact No. 113 | Extension Bulletin E-1026 | September 1976

Michigan Milk Production—1975 Tested (DHI) vs. Non-Tested Herds

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Survey studies of Michigan dairy herds in 1975 show convincingly that investment in DHI testing can be highly profitable.

Tested herds in the survey produced over 3,200 more pounds of milk than nontested herds. The difference suggests a return of more than $25.00 for every dollar invested in DHI testing.

To determine accurately the advantage held by DHIA-tested dairy herds, a count of herds and number of cows in each herd was made for one of the major Michigan dairy counties. A listing of pounds of milk sold per herd was provided by the Milk Marketing Administrator with the restriction that herds be identified only by code. DHIA herds were identified as a part of the testing program.

The state BRT (Brucellosis Ring Test) listing along with personal visits to each farm resulted in the development of an accurate listing of dairy herds and cow numbers. Herds not showing milk sales by the Market Administrator were coded as non-grade A. Herds off the market for any portion of the year or those lacking complete information were excluded from the study.

Inventories of cow numbers developed from data reported by the Crop Reporting Service are shown for Michigan and for Kent County in Table 1. Likewise, results determined by this study are shown. The close similarity in results between the two sources substantiates the results.

Table 2 shows a breakdown of the dairy herds in Kent County according to test, market and completeness of data. Nineteen percent of the herds and 30 percent of the cows were on DHI test, and milk from 83 percent of the herds and 94 percent of the cows went into the Grade A market.

As shown in Table 3, the average milk sold for tested herds in Kent County was 3,205 pounds above that of non-tested herds. Those herds on test averaged 13,014 pounds milk as compared to 9,809 pounds for herds not on test. At the current price of milk this difference represents $305 greater milk sales per cow.

DHI continues to offer a tremendous advantage to those dairymen utilizing the testing service. And testing continues to be one of the practices employed by dairymen with higher producing herds.

A further comparison was made with large commercial operations of 100 or more milking cows. As shown in Table 4, there were 11 DHI herds and 12 non-DHI herds in Kent Coun-

Table 2—Distribution of Cows in Kent County by Test and Market.

	Number of herds	Number of cows	
		Total	Average/herd
Grade A			
DHI	52	3,914	75.3
Non-DHI	150	7,475	49.8
Non-DHI*	22	993	45.1
Non-Grade A			
Non-DHI	46	788	17.1
Total	270	13,170	48.8

**Herds off market for any portion of the year or those lacking complete information.*

Table 3—DHI vs. Non-DHI Dairy Herds in Kent County.

	Number of herds	Number of cows	Milk sold/cow (lb)	Dollar income/cow*
DHI	52	3,914	13,014	$1,239
Non-DHI	150	7,475	9,809	934
Difference			3,205	$ 305

**Dollar income calculated at $9.52/cwt of milk sold.*

Table 1—Dairy Cow Numbers and Production for Michigan and Sample County.

	Number of cows			Milk sold/cow (lb.)		
	Total	DHI	Non-DHI	DHI	Non-DHI	Difference
Michigan	420,000	130,138	289,862	13,738	10,557	3,181
Kent County						
CRS	13,500	3,100	10,400	14,121	10,910	3,311
Survey	11,389*	3,914	7,475	13,014	9,809	3,205

**Total cows recorded in the survey was 13,170. The smaller number represents those without complete data or selling Non-Grade A milk.*

ty with 100 or more milking cows. The herd average for DHI herds exceeded the non-DHI herds by 3,990 pounds milk and $51,585 milk sales.

The 11 herds on DHI are not in the purebred business; only 2 herds show any registered animals, and one of these is one-half Guernseys. These dairymen are interested in only the so-called bottom line, or the dollar column. Table 4 suggests that all large commercial dairy herds can and must pay attention to the "little details." The difference in gross income suggests that each herd could actually afford its own full time tester. The $51,585 increase in gross income for the tested herds represents a cost of $1,150 for testing fees and $20,634 increase in feed cost — a net return over testing fees and feed cost of $29,801 and a return of over $25.00 for every dollar invested in DHI testing.

The facts simply do not substantiate the contention that large herds without records do as well as tested herds.

Table 5 dramatically shows the difference in milk production between individual large commercial DHI and Non-DHI dairy herds.

Conclusions of the Surveys

— The data presented here are exact for one county. It is to be expected that the entire state would furnish similar results.

— Crop Reporting data furnish a relatively accurate survey of the dairy industry of Michigan.

— Dairy farmers with production records have a definite competitive advantage over those not testing.

— Large commercial dairy farms (100 cows or over) are not likely to survive without production records.

— We must determine the exact roll of DHI in successful herd management.

— Extension should strive to enroll all commercial dairy herds in one of the testing programs and provide the necessary information for profitable management.

Table 4—DHI vs. Non-DHI Large Commercial Herds—Kent County.

	Number of herds	Number of cows Average/herd	Milk sold/cow (lb)	Dollar income/herd*
DHI	11	143	13,560	$184,600
Non-DHI	12	146	9,570	133,015
Difference			3,990	$ 51,585

**Dollar income calculated at $9.52/cwt of milk sold.*

Table 5—Milk Sold by Individual DHI and Non-DHI Large Commercial Dairy Herds.

DHI cows	Avg. milk sold/cow (lb)	Non-DHI cows	Avg. milk sold/cow (lb)
110	15,514		
227	15,072		
120	14,563		
160	14,504		
105	14,057		
175	13,804		
142	12,473	120	12,976
112	12,410	120	12,670
188	12,288		
110	11,947		
		160	11,309
		160	11,132
		240	11,015
		164	9,936
		100	9,121
		120	8,987
		140	8,770
		110	8,410
		205	5,250
		110	5,228

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