



PATLQ

NEWSLETTER

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John E. Moxley Building · 555 Des Anciens-Combattants Blvd.
Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue, Quebec H9X 3R4

NEW! NEW! NEW!

Quickly delivering profitable information at the farm:

PATLQ is proud to offer *InfoPROFITABILITY!*

Your reports available on the INTERNET

Do you want faster access to profitable data ? **As of March 1st, 2001**, PATLQ is making its reports available on the Internet. Clients and advisors can now access the hottest information on average within 48 hours of test day, thereby saving the time of conventional mail delivery. To celebrate this good news, **Internet reports will be free of charge until August 31st, 2001**. For more details, contact your advisor or check our Web site at **www.patlq.com** !

Comparative analysis ("Benchmarking")

Since February, the *Performance Record - Herd Summary* report provides **two columns of comparative statistics** enabling PATLQ clients to compare their herd's performance to the averages - and better yet, to the best herds - of their county, region, province, or all of Canada. For more details, see the February issue of *Quebec Farmer's Advocate*.

Annual Production Summary

As of March 2001, the *Annual Production Summary* features **two sets of averages** for the herd as well as for each breed. The first set, *Lactations contributing to MHA (Management Herd Average)*, provides all the data available for management purposes. The second set, *Lactations contributing to PRA (Publishable Record Average)* summarizes the data admissible for award qualification, following current standards applied by the *Canadian Dairy Network*. Watch for details in the March issue of *Quebec Farmer's Advocate*.

Optional Columns

Since last fall, the *Production and Management - Cow Monitor* report provides **four optional**

columns. The producer can order, on a monthly basis, a different set of useful statistics among 39 options on test day results, management, production, reproduction and several economic parameters. See your advisor today !

Payment via Internet or by phone

Available since the end of January. See details on page 7.

**More than ever,
PATLQ quickly delivers
the most profitable
information at the farm.**

**That is called
InfoPROFITABILITY ! And it's
yours for the taking !**

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"Salon de l'agriculteur" 2001

Place your bet on PATLQ's counseling services !

At the 2001 edition of the *Salon de l'Agriculteur*, held in St-Hyacinthe January 9th to 11th, four dairy industry partners pooled their resources for a drawing. CIAQ, CIQ, Holstein Québec and PATLQ each offered ten \$50 credits. For PATLQ, the credit was on counseling services. Ten winners won a value of \$200 each. The winners (with the name of their advisor) are:



Drawing by dairy industry partners: **Hélène Drapeau** CIAQ, **Yves Delorme**, CIQ, **Rosaire Chrétien**, PATLQ and **André Couture**, Holstein Québec.

Charles Cartier, Saint-Gérard-Majella
F. et C. Bourassa, Sainte-Anne-de-la-Rochelle
Ferme Pierre Gillene, Saint-Zéphirin
Ferme Janick, Saint-Cyrille-de-Wendover
Bernard Martin, Sainte-Cécile-de-Milton
Roger Brisson, Ferme BRG inc., Saint-Stanislas-de-Kostka
Ferme Girard et fils, Saint-Liboire
Ferme Médau, Saint-Alexandre
Guy Bélanger, Lambton
Claude Couture, Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle

Claude Huot
Michel Brien
Guillaume Poirier
Richard Dubé
Jean-Marie Robert
Richard Primeau
Carole Laliberté
Nicole Perreault
Rejean Fontaine
Raymond Métayer

PATLQ services pay off !

Every year, PATLQ provides **80,000 hours** of counseling services, bringing sizeable savings to its clientele, especially in the fields of nutrition and heifer rearing costs. Upon visiting the PATLQ stand at the *Salon de l'Agriculteur*, clients were invited to "place a bet on their advisor" and spin the wheel of fortune. Eight producers got their advisor's number and won a free hour of **PROM-S** services. Here are the winners, with the name of their advisor:

Réjean Lacerte, Ferme Lacerte et Frères, Saint-Sévère
Luc Piché, Ferme Picagri, Sainte-Thècle
Pierre Leclerc, Ferme Rivière-Portneuf enr., Pont-Rouge
André Deschamps, Ferme L.R. Deschamps, Saint-Thimothée
Ferme Berleur et Fils inc., Saint-Sébastien
Julie and Mario Lacerte, Ferme Marielie, Yamachiche
Ferme du Lac d'Argent enr., Marbleton
Ferme René Lefebvre et Fils, Saint-Constant

Patrick Vincent
Yvon Béland
Richard Pellerin
Richard Primeau
Ghyslain Côté
Patrick Vincent
Chantal Cliche
Raymond Métayer

Congratulations to the winners and to all participants ! When you call upon PATLQ expertise, you are all winners. **PATLQ quickly delivers the most profitable information at the farm. That is called InfoPROFITABILITY ! And it's yours for the taking !**

PROM-S and heifer management

When youth cares for youth

By Raymond Castonguay, Development Agent and Jeannot Côté, Advisor

Jeannette and Jean-Louis Garneau are the owners of *Ferme Gargouille Inc.*, located on Rang 8 in St-Fortunat, in the Bois-Francs area. Among their six daughters, Louise is a student at *CEGEP de Victoriaville* in the *Farm Management Technology* programme and she firmly intends to take over the family farm someday.

When you talk about youth, you talk about the future! Not only for people, but for the herd too. So, in 1998, PATLQ advisor Jeannot Côté introduced Louise to the notion that following heifer progress is as important as managing cows in milk production.

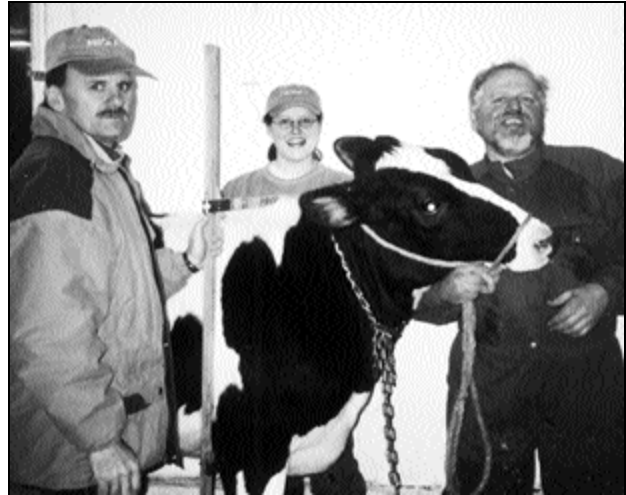
Won over, Louise signed up with **PROM-S**, PATLQ's programme for heifer management. As everyone knows, **PROM-S** involves the regular measurement of heifers, comparing the data with existing averages and percentile rankings for the breed, then taking action as required to improve weight and height and reduce calving age.

Upon the first measurements, Louise was astonished to see the condition of the herd: percentile rankings of 64 for weight and 61 for height. She took a long and hard look at the figures, then began working along Jeannot's recommendations. One year later, percentile rankings had climbed to 85 for weight and 78 for height. Today, they stand at 92 and 89 respectively, which means that this herd is now among the best 10% in Québec!

Louise weighs heifers monthly in winter and measures heights during her advisor's visits. The feed ration is balanced according to TMR group 2, so adjustments are done on a monthly basis for energy and/or protein availability, according to observable results.

In three years, the age at first calving has been lowered by 2.2 months and for heifers currently in calf, the projection is under 26 months (the provincial average being 27.9 months). As for the weight of first lactation heifers, it climbed from 580 to 636 kg in the same period.

Today, the 30 cows in the herd yield 10,104 kg of milk per year, for BCAs of 220-222-227. First lactation heifers represent 40% of the herd and their milk



Thanks to **PROM-S**, at *Ferme Gargouille inc.*, heifer weight and height climb by more than 25 percentile points in two years. **Jeannot Côté**, advisor, **Louise Garneau** and her father **Jean-Louis**, with heifer MASKITA RUBENS MINDY, which was won by the family in last year's **PROM-S** campaign.

projection is 8,970 kg (BCA 223-227-232). At this most encouraging rate, where will be *Ferme Gargouille* by the time the young generation takes over? Just imagine...

Last year, the Garneau family was among the five winners of the **PROM-S** campaign, winning a superb heifer, MASKITA RUBENS MINDY. But the real bargain was signing up with **PROM-S** in the first place. The Garneau family is delighted with the PATLQ heifer management programme, and they are enthusiastically devoted to it. **PROM-S** represents the future for youth !

2001 PROM-S Campaign

A reminder: this year's **PROM-S** campaign is in full swing until April 30, with five major prizes of \$1000 in credit on PATLQ services, \$500 gift certificates in five magnificent holiday centers and \$150 bonuses specially for rural youth. However, the most important thing to remember with **PROM-S** is that productivity and profitability will increase at your farm. That is the most wonderful reward of all !

Verification of Milking Equipment and Methods

A **VMEM** visit once a year, for peace of mind... and profit !

By Sylvain Biron, Regional Manager, Les Rives

As everybody knows, a tool that is used runs better than a tool kept in the closet. An ax that chops every morning does not rust. A tractor that runs every day starts right away. So what can be said about a milking system that runs at least twice a day, 365 days a

year? It works smoothly, right? Well... not always. Just as an ax will need sharpening, just as a tractor still needs lubrication, a milking system that pumps day in and day out needs regular verification and maintenance. This will translate into better safety, improved performance and, on the bot-

tom line, a sizeable revenue increase.

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For an experienced dairy producer, the solution is obvious: calling upon a **VMEM** (*Verification of Milking Equipment and Methods*) visit by a PATLQ specialist once a year. Thoroughly checking pulsators, vacuum regulator, vacuum reserve, pump capacity, pipeline slope, vacuum level at the claw: **VMEM** is a complete diagnostic by an experienced and completely neutral professional. But there is more to milking cows than the hardware: there is also the working method! The **VMEM** visit takes place during milking so that milking methods can be improved and maintained at an optimal level.

A routine like the milking of forty cows or more is quite taxing. With passing years, you develop

ways of doing things in order to reduce physical effort and required time. You find shortcuts, you "get the knack". But some acquired habits may have a negative impact on production and cow health. Teats get wiped a bit fast, a cup liner dabs into the dirt, manipulation is done a bit hastily... and a few weeks later, somatic cell count (SCC) is on the rise. Even when you work with the utmost care, it can happen that you are not aware of the latest developments in the field. Milking cows has been with us for generations, but improvements keep coming up!

Here are two producers who had positive results in exchange for a modest **VMEM** investment.

Ferme Paul Massicotte et Fils, Champlain

This Holstein farm has several family members as dedicated shareholders: Paul Massicotte, his wife Lise Hamelin, their sons André, Benoît and Roger and the youngest, Louis, will be joining soon. This fine 100-cow herd featuring a 9,038 kg production average and BCAs of 199-186-202, has a classifi-

cation of 20 VG, 50 GP, 7 G et 20 NC. Named *Master Breeder Herd* in 1993, *Ferme Paul Massicotte et Fils* called upon the **VMEM** service for the first time two years ago. "Although the situation was not critical", says Roger Massicotte, "we found that the SCC was high and that some notable progress could be done by improving this aspect. On the advice of our advisor, Bernard Marcotte, we asked for a PATLQ **VMEM** visit."

Improved milking methods and lower SCC

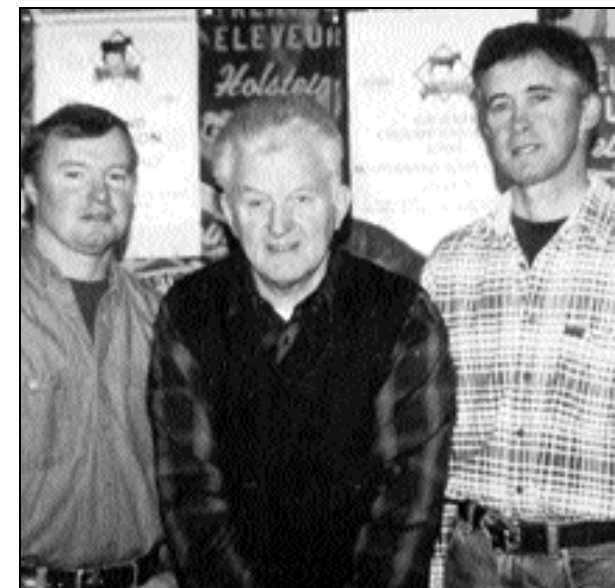
"The verification of the milking equipment helped us make improvements required by today's high-production herds. More significantly, we then changed our milking method. Due to the presence of the **VMEM** advisor during milking, we made improvements to our milking methods that resulted in easier, more efficient milking and a sharp reduction of the SCC. We were even taught to take full advantage of the cows' oxytocin release. We now apply the latest standards, approved and well-adapted to our herd. Let's face it: the PATLQ **VMEM** advisor knows his business!"

Service cost?

"It's quite minor for the complete verification of a machine that works twice a day, 365 days a year! We received a quick return on our investment!"

Ferme Jacobs inc., Cap-Santé

Ferme Jacobs is a gold medal winner from l'*Ordre du mérite agricole*. Managed by Léo, Jean and Pierre Jacobs, this superior herd numbers 100 Holstein cows in lactation, with an average production of 11,314 kg and BCA's of 239-244-256. The herd's classification is 9 EX, 62 VG, 55 GP and 10 NC, and it was twice awarded the *Master Breeder* title by *Holstein Canada*, in 1984 and 1998.



Gold Winner from l'*Ordre du Mérite agricole* and unconditional **VSMT** client: *Ferme Jacobs*, from Cap-Santé. Left to right: Pierre, Léo and Jean.

First as a preventive action

Why **VMEM**? "It was above all a preventive action", says Jean Jacobs. "We knew that milking time could be improved and we wanted to update our milking method. With this in mind, we followed the suggestion of our regular advisor, Richard Pellerin."

Improved milking time

"After the first visit, our milking time improved, which means sizeable savings when you milk 100 cows. Also, although it was not a problem, the SCC got better, which translates into less production losses. One thing is sure: you recover the cost of a **VMEM** visit very fast."

VMEM : once a year

"We have been using the PATLQ **VMEM** service once a year for three years now, and we intend to keep doing so. There are several reasons. Firstly, it is an unbiased examination. Secondly, the advisor, Mr. Jean-Côme Leblanc, is very competent and a specialist in the field. But the most important reason is having the expert on hand during milking. With the production level of our herd, we must make sure that we use the best possible milking method. The PATLQ **VMEM** advisor helped us bring our skills up to date."

Jean Jacobs concludes: "**VMEM** is a minimal investment in order to avoid major problems, and it keeps us on top of things."



Fully satisfied with PATLQ **VMEM** service : *Ferme Paul Massicotte et Fils*, from Champlain. Left to right: Benoît, Paul, Lise Hamelin, Roger and André. Absent from the picture: Louis.

VMEM : better safe than sorry

Following are the results of a survey done in 1999, with 200 respondents from across Québec. This survey indicates that PATLQ clients are very satisfied with **VMEM** (*Verification of milking equipments and methods*) service. Read on, and you will be convinced too !

"During the visit, the advisor found one or more problems." In fact, 86.1% of visited farms had at least one problem. *"The advisor checks everything and leaves nothing to chance"* (not only the pulsator or some random parts of the milking equipment): 91.5% agree with this statement. Following **VMEM** service, 87.6% proceeded with suggested modifications and 72.6% observed improvements after the modifications. Of course, a cow with a very high *somatic cell count (SCC)* will probably never get quite back to normal... In fact, before the SCC declines for the entire herd, it will probably be necessary to eliminate the animals too severely harmed. Which means it might be necessary to raise more yearlings or buy a few cows.

VMEM service takes place during milking hours. What do clients have to say about that ?

- 93.5% say they are satisfied with information provided by the advisor about milking methods.
- 92.5% liked having the advisor present during milking.
- 88.6% say the advisor actually helped them improve their milking methods.

VMEM is not associated to an equipment supplier. PATLQ advisors give a nonpartisan opinion. They have nothing to sell and will not urge you to change anything that does not need to be:

- 93.5% of respondents highly esteemed the advisors' neutrality.
- 75.1% of respondents said they found **VMEM** service to be more comprehensive than the dealer's.

So, before doing any costly move toward changing your entire milking system, look into a **VMEM** visit: 88.6% conclude that this service is profitable. If your problem is not due to your milking equipment or methods, at least you will have concrete proof.

Better safe than sorry... Would you start a job in the field without greasing the machinery? Don't you perform a regular inspection on your tractors? You don't wait for the red light to blink before checking oil! So why wait for the SCC to climb before doing a verification of your milking equipment? Stop losing money! Remember: in order for your herd to perform at top level, it is better for your cows to have an SCC lower than 200,000.

Don't wait until it is too late. Call your **VMEM** advisor (see list below) or call your PATLQ regular advisor.

PATLQ **VMEM** advisors:

Gilles Laramée, St-Hyacinthe	450-774-1554
Jean-Côme Leblanc, Nicolet jcleblanc@patlq.com	819-293-4882
Marcel Thiboutot, Ste-Hélène, Kamouraska	418-492-9496

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Congratulations to Cérès 2001 Award Winners

The 2001 edition of the *Gala Cérès* was held on January 10th at the *Salon de l'agriculteur*. This contest, bearing the name of the goddess of harvest in Roman mythology, celebrates the outstanding success of elite Québec farmers. PATLQ congratulates all the winners and salutes the great performances among dairy producers:

In the category *Farmers established for less than ten years*:

René and **Corrine Alleman**, la *Ferme ARCA*, from Saint-Norbert d'Arthabasca.
Peter Strebel, la *Ferme Strebel et fils*, from Saint-Blaise.

In the category *Farms with three owners or less*:

Denis and **Marcel Groleau**, la *Ferme D.M. Groleau inc.*, from Thetford-Mines.

Agricultrice de l'année in Québec

Last fall, **Céline Bélanger**, of *Ferme Rochelain*, in Saint-Albert, was named *Agricultrice de l'année* in Québec. When you think that the farm was also named *Holstein Master Breeder*, this is a year that is not likely to be forgotten! Congratulations to **Céline**, and husband **J. Alain** and their children. Because, as everybody knows, farming is a family affair!

Holstein Master Breeders for 2001 in Québec

The *Master Breeder* title is the most distinguished award given by *Holstein Canada*. PATLQ offers enthusiastic congratulations to the nine Québec families honored this year:

Ferme Loubel Holsteins , Saint-Boniface	Ferme J. Alain Laroche , from Saint-Albert
Ferme Drolet et fils , Saint-Raymond	Ferme Séjour inc. , Compton
Ferme Ghielen et fils inc. , Champlain	Ferme Suntor Holsteins , Ormstown
Ferme B. Lehoux et fils inc. , St-Elzéar	Ferme Karona, Plessisville (Pierre & Raymond Caron)
Ferme Milibro , Tingwick (Michel, Lise and Daniel Brochu)	

Paying your bill via Internet or by phone

Something to celebrate ! As of January 2001, you can pay your PATLQ invoice by phone or via the Internet. *The National Bank*, the *Bank of Montreal* and *les Caisses Desjardins* will accept your transactions as soon as you are registered. You can register with your local branch, or by contacting:

National Bank	www.bnc.ca	1-888-835-6281 (1-800-TELNAT-1)
Bank of Montreal	www.bmo.com	1-800-363-9992 (English)
		1-800-361-6681 (French)
Caisses Desjardins	www.desjardins.com	1-800-224-7737 (1-800-CAISSES)

This information is also available on PATLQ's Web site, at www.patlq.com.

PATLQ Board of Directors 2000-2001

We did not have the opportunity to introduce them in our last issue! Our Board of Directors as of last September:

Gilbert Rioux	President, dairy producer and FPLQ Board Member
Jean-Guy Beaulieu	Vice-President, dairy producer named by the Conseil québécois des races laitières
Gilbert Perreault	dairy producer and FPLQ Board Member
Luc Quintal	dairy producer and FPLQ Board Member
Michel Potvin	dairy producer and FPLQ Board Member
Roger Cue	professor, McGill University
Kevin Wade	professor, McGill University
Jacques Olivier	Regional Director, Chaudières-Appalaches, MAPAQ
Yvan Savoie	Director of Technological Services, MAPAQ

How well do you know your *Vision2000 Interpretation Manual and Reports* ?

The search continues...

Nearly 750 entries were received for the 2nd edition of the *Vision2000* Contest. The drawing was held on January 30th. **Daniel Pinsonneault** from St-Maurice and **Yvan Levasseur** from Trois-Rivières each won a credit of \$50 on barn cards. Congratulations to all !

Answers to Quiz # 2 :

Question 1

Weight objective after first calving can be found in section *Production and Management - Performance Record - Herd Summary*, in the table on page 5. Actual weight of your herd is found on the corresponding report, in the first column.

Question 2

On your *Cow Profile* report, the Lactation Rating represents:

- b) **The level of reliability of the lactation data**

Question 3

How can I raise the milk urea nitrogen level in my herd ?

d) **All the answers are correct:**

- a) Offer better forages
- b) Increase the amount and protein content in concentrates
- c) Choose protein feeds with a higher rumen degradability

Question 4

On the *Cow Management Report - Cow Monitor*, the Cow Rating:

- c) **Takes into account the protein level of the milk**

And here is Quiz number 3 !

Two more prizes will be drawn on April 27, 2001. Each winner will receive a \$50 **PROM-S** credit.

"I know Vision2000" Contest - Quiz no 3

Question 1

On the *Certificate of production* report, the production figure *Average Kg Milk per day of cow life* is influenced by:

- a) An early first calving
- b) The calving interval
- c) The animal's life duration and genetic potential
- d) All of the above

Question 2

Two cows of the same age and same breed yield 10 000 kg of milk but have different BCA's. Among possible reasons :

- a) One of them was milked 3 times a day
- b) They did not calve in the same month
- c) One is at her 2nd lactation, the other at her 3rd
- d) A et C are correct

Question 3

On the *SCC Report - Cow Summary*, the % of *Herd SCC* indicates:

- a) The contribution level of each cow to the herd SCC average
- b) The contamination risk level
- c) Loss of production
- d) None of the above

Question 4

Second lactation cows should yield about 15% more milk than first lactation cows. If this level is not reached, one should verify:

- a) Body condition at the end of lactation
- b) The average age of the herd
- c) The number of dry days
- d) A et C are correct

Reply Form "I know Vision2000" Contest - Quiz #3 - March-April 2001

Answers : 1 : _____ 2 : _____ 3 : _____ 4 : _____

Name : _____ Herd # : _____

Address : _____

Tel : _____ Fax : _____

E-mail : _____

Please return **prior to April 27, 2001** to the attention of Julie Charlebois, PATLQ, 555 boul. des Anciens-Combattants, Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue, Québec H9X 3R4 -- Fax: 514-398-7963 - E-mail: jcharlebois@patlq.com (You may enter by E-mail. Just write in the subject box "**Quiz no 3**", followed by your herd number, and give your four answers and full name and address as your message).