

Our contest for February!

Results for Quiz Number 14

The drawing was made on January 26th, among several hundred entries. The winners are: **Martin Desautels**, Drummondville (advisor: Evelyne La Roche) and **Gilbert Boucher**, L'Islet (advisor: Marcel St-Amant). Each won a \$50 credit on PATLQ services. Congratulations to all participants!

The correct answers were:

Question 1

Among these symptoms, which can be related to the presence of mycotoxins in the ration?

(all four symptoms are related):

- a) Reduction of feed consumption
- b) Reduction of milk production
- c) Abortions
- d) Ongoing oestrus

Question 2

When mycotoxins are present in the ration, what actions can contribute to solve the problem?

- b) Increase contents in energy, protein and other nutrients
- c) Adding binders
- d) Dilute contaminated feed with healthy feed
- e) Get rid of the contaminated feed

Question 3

Whether average milk production is at 6,000 or 10,000 kg, the herd's calving interval is about the same.

True

Question 4

Which among the following factors influence the consumption of forage dry matter :

(all four factors are good)

- a) Quality of forages
- b) Availability of water
- c) Number of meals
- d) Herd average weight

Here is Quiz Number 15 !

Answers can be found in this bulletin or by consulting your advisor. Two \$50 credits on advisory services will be drawn on March 29, 2004.

Question 1

Concerning heifer growth, what are the target ADG (average daily gain) for the Holstein and Ayrshire breeds (at the 50th percentile) ?

- a) 700 g HO - 650 g AY
- b) 810 g HO - 700 g AY
- c) 500 g HO - 425 g AY
- d) 950 g HO - 800 g AY

Question 2

What is, over the last 15 years, the weight increase percentage for heifers at first calving?

- a) 5 %
- b) 10 %
- c) 15 %
- d) 20 %

Question 3

On your 2004 Annual Herd Management Report, what are the figures for average herd weight and age at first calving for your herd?

Question 4

What is the daily amount of concentrates a cow should be consuming at calving time?

- a) 1 kg
- b) 6 kg
- c) 0,75 % of live weight
- d) 2 % of live weight

Entries must be received **prior to March 26, 2004**. Please send to the attention of Julie Charlebois, PATLQ, 555 boul. des Anciens-Combattants, Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue, Quebec H9X 3R4 — Fax: 514-398-7963 – E-mail: jcharlebois@patlq.com (You may enter by E-mail. Just write in the subject box "Quiz - 15", followed by your herd number, and give your answers and full name and address as your message).

Reply Form – Quiz N° 15 - February 2004

Answers : 1 : _____ 2 : _____ 3 : _____ kg _____ months 4 : _____

Name : _____ Herd Number : _____

Address : _____

Tel : _____ Fax : _____

E-mail : _____



PATLQ

NEWSLETTER

66 - FEBRUARY 2004

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

Reducing costs while increasing expertise

PATLQ now serves close to 80% of Quebec dairy producers. Over the years, in order to keep service costs as low as possible, PATLQ engaged in several profitable partnerships:

- development of a single database and an integrated computer team for all Canada (Vision2000)
- saving on laboratory costs by consolidating milk recording activities and payment analyses in a single working unit
- agreement with CIAQ to reduce milk recording basic fees through herd contribution to genetic evaluation

This partnership approach will remain on the front line in the coming

years. For instance, we are currently studying with our Canadian milk recording partners the possibility of sharing costs for the development of a unique data entry tool for all of Canada, financed by dairy producers from sea to shining sea.

We have the continuing support of MAPAQ for the development of advisory services and for the ongoing growth of PATLQ as a *centre of expertise in dairy production*. However, the implementation of such a centre of expertise rests on far more than just cost reduction strategy. The expertise offered to dairy producers will have to be truly unique, and provide an excellent return on investment.



Striving to improve the profitability of dairy producers, such is our commitment for the future.

Bertrand Farmer, agr.
General Manager

A visit by Minister Françoise Gauthier

On January 20th, Mrs Françoise Gauthier, Quebec Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Alimentation, visited the PATLQ headquarters. After a presentation

on PATLQ's present and future role by General Manager Bertrand Farmer, Mrs. Gauthier and her staff had a tour of the laboratory and computer centre, accompanied by

PATLQ President Gilbert Rioux, Vice-President Luc Quintal, and Business Development Manager Ann Louise Carson, agr.

Jérôme Thiboutot, cabinet staff member, Gilbert Rioux, President of PATLQ, Ann Louise Carson, Business Development Manager and Minister Françoise Gauthier on the PATLQ laboratory balcony.



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Agri-Lacta :

"Holding the wealth of your data in your own hands!"

Dairy producers now have the unique opportunity to manage their herd with **Agri-Lacta**, the very same software used by their PATLQ advisor. Owning **Agri-Lacta** at the farm helps taking top benefit from advisory services. A producer from the Outaouais region says: "I feel much more prepared when my advisor comes at the farm, because all my data is already entered, I've had time to study my **Agri-Lacta** reports, my questions are ready and we can go straight to practical matters. Sharing the same management software has been a tremendous improvement."

Developed in partnership with **Agri-Gestion inc.**, **Agri-Lacta** is a flexible software, covering several key aspects of herd management:

- Data entry
- Easy printing of tailor-made reports
- Data transfer to ATQ
- Holstein registrations

Agri-Lacta is very user friendly. A producer comments that he does his data entry once a week in winter and once a month in summer. Everything is written down at the barn on his PATLQ registry and whenever he has a free evening, he transfers it all 'in a cinch' to **Agri-Lacta**.

Other advantages of having **Agri-Lacta** at home include:

- Full time access to your herd data
- Two entire years of entries already included
- Better time management - entering your data according to your own schedule
- Price includes installation and personalised training at the farm, as well as free customer service via a 1-800 phone line.

For more information on the **Agri-Lacta** software, please contact your PATLQ advisor or **Agri-Gestion** at 1-800-463-7283.

New improvements make your life easier

Agri-Lacta now allows more efficient data entry from herds milking three times a day (3X), including two milk recordings out of three (3X A/P), as well as data from automated milking systems, including robots.

Furthermore, in the next few weeks, two **Vision2000** reports are available - free of charge -, that provide a quick overview of problem animals within the herd, helping you define your priorities.

1. The **Hotsheet Report**, or **Cow Exception List**, provides a survey of the cows that could be experiencing problems. Cows are listed according to seven key performance indicators: low lactation peak, decrease in milk BCA, low fat %, low protein %, high protein/fat ratio and new SCC result over 200,000.

2. The **SCC Report - Management List** is an excellent tool to take better control of the herd's somatic cell count. Only the cows with an SCC over 200,000 are included. They are listed in order of priority, with a clear assessment of what is to be gained by acting on each individual case.

Please contact your advisor to access these reports.

Growth Monitoring

New curves for today's heifers

Over the years, better management by herd owners, coupled with genetic progress, have resulted in improved heifer growth. For the Holstein and Ayrshire breeds, weight at first calving increased by almost 50 kg in ten years. Over the last 15 years, this represents a 15% increase. Gains are still to be made, however, notably for age at first calving, which is still far from the 24-month proposed target. We are still around 28 months for Ayrshires and 27 months for Holsteins, an improvement of only one month in ten years.

Calving at 24 months keeps the raising costs at a minimum and life profit at a maximum. PATLQ statistics show that, as long as optimal weight is reached, early calving is not detrimental to milk production. So, careful monitoring of heifer growth guarantees increased profits.

To get there, you need reliable standard growth curves. Standards currently used in Quebec were published in 1996¹, and were based on measurements done at the end of the 80's. However, because of the improvements cited above, the 1996 figures are not representative of today's heifers anymore.

PATLQ just produced new curves, which will be used by advisors and **Agri-Lacta** users by the Spring of 2004. These new standards were obtained with growth measu-

By Daniel Lefebvre, Ph.D., agr.



rements on close to 24,000 heifers, monitored with the **PROM-S** program over the last few years, as well as data for age and weight at first calving collected between 2000 and 2002 on more than 175 000 cows.

Figure 1 compares the current and new standards for the weight of Holstein heifers. The 24-month target weight is now higher, reflecting the average increase over the last years. For the Holstein breed, this average weight before calving is now set at close to 640 kg, and at close to 725 kg for heifers at the 90th percentile. In order to reach these goals, the average daily gain is about 810 g/d for the 50th percentile and 910 g/d for the 90th percentile. For the Ayrshire breed, average target weight at 24 months is 550 kg, which translates into an average daily gain of 700 g/d.

New curves have also been generated for height at the withers. These curves also reflect heifers progress in stature.

Being more representative of today's reality, the new curves will help improve heifer growth monitoring.

¹R. Martin, *Guide de croissance des taures, Guide Bovins Laitiers, CPAQ*

Drawing of the dairy partners at the 2004 Salon de l'agriculture

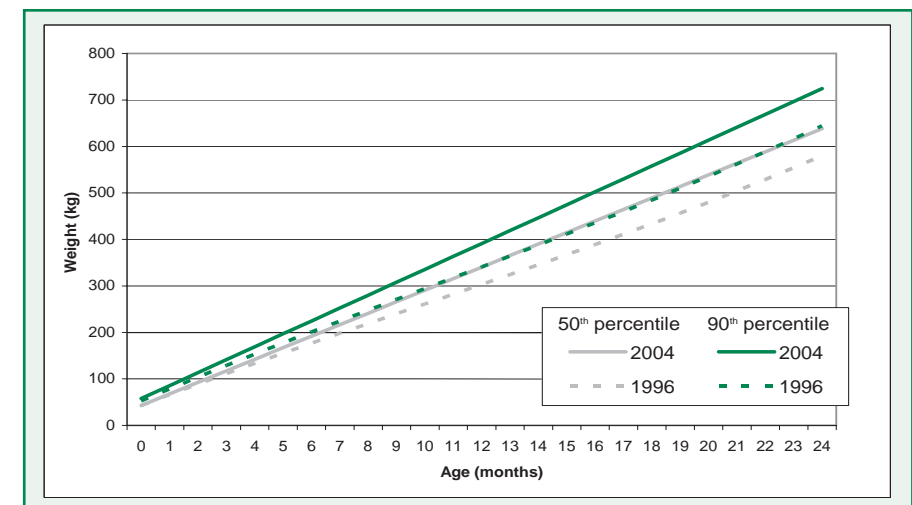
On January 15th, at the closing of the 2004 Salon de l'agriculture, your dairy partners proceeded with their traditional drawing. Ten dairy producers from everywhere in Quebec won a handsome *Holstein Québec* coat, as well as credits on CIAQ and PATLQ services. Thanks to all clients who came by to say hello !



From left to right:
Jean-Denis Vermette,
GeneXpress and Strat@gen service
development at CIAQ,
Hélène Létourneau,
Communication Manager
at *Holstein Québec* and
Rosaire Chrétien, Regional Manager,
Les Appalaches, at PATLQ.

Figure 1.
Reference curves
for the weight of Holstein
heifers, proposed (2004)
and current (1996)

A more comprehensive
article on the new growth
curves will appear in
*Le producteur de lait
québécois* and *Quebec
Farmer's Advocate*
in April 2004.



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Tel.: (514) 398-7880 • Fax: (514) 398-7963 • Voice mail: 1-800-BON-LAIT • www.patlq.com

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