



5000 participants as of February 24!

PATLQ training sessions remain highly popular. On February 24, long before the end of our fourth season, we have contacted 5000 clients through our courses! Thanks to all participants! More in our next issue.

Results of Quiz N° 18

The draw took place on January 17 from among more than 500 entries. The winners are: **Ferme Avilait**, Ste-Sophie d'Halifax (Advisor: **Martin Côté**) and **Pascal Bergeron**, St-Paulin (Advisor: **Simon Smith**). Each won a \$50 credit on PATLQ advisory services. Congratulations to all participants!

The correct answers were: Q-1 : b. Q-2 : b. Q-3 : a. Q-4 : a.

Quiz N° 19

Answers can be found in this bulletin or on documents mentioned in the question. You may also ask your advisor for help. Two \$50 credits for advisory services will be drawn on April 8, 2005.

Question 1

Since the 1980's, average age at calving for Quebec cows went from 60 months down to:

- a) 56 months
- b) 54 months
- c) 52 months
- d) 50 months

Question 2

A cow will reach full milk yield at:

- a) first lactation
- b) second lactation
- c) third lactation
- d) fourth lactation

Question 3

Auxiliary traits - According to the leaflet " Objective 100% " recently circulated by CIAQ, evaluation for both milking speed and milking temperament *must be done before the _____th day of the first lactation.*

Question 4

Calving weight - Average weight after first calving should be about 93% of the herd average weight. According to your 2005 Annual Herd Management Report, the percentage for your herd is _____ %.

Entries must be received **prior to April 8, 2005**. Please send to the attention of **France Lauzon**, PATLQ, 555 boul. des Anciens-Combattants, Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue, Quebec H9X 3R4 -- Fax: 514-398-7963 - E-mail: quiz@patlq.com (You may enter by E-mail. Just write in the subject box "Quiz - 19", followed by your herd number, and give your answers and full name and address as your message).

Reply Form – Quiz N° 19 - March 2005

Answers: 1 : _____ 2 : _____ 3 : _____ 4 : _____
 Name: _____ Herd Number: _____
 Address: _____
 Tel.: _____ Fax: _____
 E-mail: _____



PATLQ

NEWSLETTER

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Lots of cheerful people at 2005 agricultural trade shows !

At *Salon provincial de la machinerie agricole de Québec*, on February 5, **Jeannot Côté**, advisor (right), gives a service credit to the three generations of **Ferme Coupar**, from Thetford-Mines.

Left to right: **Gérard Couture**, his son **Michel** and his own two sons. Back: **Jean-Marie Rodrigue**, producer from St-Jean de Brébeuf. Their advisor is **Claude Deshaies**. See list of winners at both *Salons* on page 2.



Through a Veterinarian-PATLQ partnership

A new improved Herd Register

by Ann Louise Carson, agr., Business Development Director

The new HERD REGISTER is now available. Resulting from a partnership between PATLQ and Veterinarians, the Register now provides a single tool to record herd health, management data and even auxiliary traits!

6000 Quebec dairy farmers are enrolled with PATLQ. Production and management data are recorded with *Agri-Lacta*, our basic tool for milk recording and advisory services. Additionally, the health of 1800 Quebec herds is being monitored through fifty-five veterinary clinics (approximately 150 Veterinarians) registered with the DS@HR service. These clinics use the **AHR Dairy Program** to monitor health. The majority of these 1800 herds are PATLQ. Clients.

Prior to this partnership, these producers had to record their data in two

separate registers. This duplication (i.e. calving dates, breedings, etc.) was an irritant as well as a significant source of omissions and errors. The new combined Herd Register makes it easier for dairy producers to record the information needed by their Veterinarians and PATLQ advisors. Furthermore, an additional 4000 herds now have the opportunity to record health data in addition to the management data entered on their current Register.. DS@HR clients can get a Herd Register with removable carbon copies. These copies can then be sent to their veterinary clinic.

The new Herd Register is being distributed to ALL dairy producers by PATLQ. It should be noted that, through the generous support of two pharmaceutical firms, *Elanco* and *Pfizer*, the Register is offered free of charge to all clients.

In-depth consultations with clients, and the implementation of their excellent suggestions resulted in superb Herd Register. Let us all make the best of it for optimal profit!

For more details, please read the PATLQ chronicle in the March issue of *Le producteur de lait québécois* or the *Quebec Farmers Advocate*. You may also ask your Veterinarian, your PATLQ Advisor or Data Entry Technician.

Summary

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Salon de l'agriculture, St-Hyacinthe, January 11th - 13th,
Salon provincial de la machinerie agricole, Québec, February 3rd - 5th

Lots of smiling faces at the 2005 trade shows

Two industry *Salons* launched the year 2005. As always, the PATLQ exhibit was a hive of activity. Most visitors sang the praises of the personnel and services offered by PATLQ. A small number had some suggestions for improvements and some took the time to have their questions on new services answered. As with previous years, the traditional dairy partners draw and the lucky wheel were very popular.

At the Lucky Wheel

a) Five VMEM visits sponsored by FPLQ:

Réjean Lamontagne, Ste-Élisabeth.
Advisor: **Michel Mongrain**

Louis Marie Ferron, St-Léon.
Advisor: **Simon Smith**

René Desrochers, Leclercville.
Advisor: **Denis Perusse**

Ferme Yveclair, Ste-Luce.
Advisor: **Karine Chénard**

Ferme Duben, Saint-Michel de Bellechasse.
Advisor: **Gilbert Patry**

b) One free hour of advisory services:

Adrien André, St-Polycarpe.
Advisor: **Nathalie Rondeau**

Normand Amesse, St-Timothée.
Advisor: **Richard Primeau**

Pascal Martin, Ste-Cécile de Milton.
Advisor: **Lyne Brodeur**

Ferme Michaud et Frères, Amqui.
Advisor: **Francis Caron**

Ferme Albri, Baie-St-Paul.
Advisor: **Alain Fortin**

Ferme Dall, Saint-Jean de la Lande, Beauce.
Advisor: **Michel Gilbert**

c) Other prizes:

- 22 URÉELAB services for the entire herd,
- 28 feed analyses,
- 108 electronic animal registrations.



Salon de l'agriculture, Thursday January 13, Four PM.
Time for the traditional draw of your dairy partners!
Left to right: **Alan Bryson**, Genetics Expert, CIAQ,
Rosaire Chrétien, Regional Manager, Les Appalaches, PATLQ,
James Peel, General Manager, Holstein Québec.

Two sessions of Personalized Strategic Advisory Services at the farm

Denis Cadieux, St-Denis sur Richelieu. Strategic Advisor: **Diane Lequin**.

Yves Roy, Tring-Jonction. Strategic Advisor: **Bruno Gosselin**.

The dairy partners draw: 16 winners in all

Prizes were: \$50 credits from Holstein Québec, CIAQ, and PATLQ, for a total of \$150 at Salon de l'agriculture and \$100 at Salon de la machinerie agricole de Québec (CIAQ and PATLQ only).

Winners of partners' credits

Marie-Claire & George Germiquet, Roxton Falls
Pierre Montplaisir, Bécancour
Mathieu Pelletier, St-Malo, Compton
Benoit Goderre, Ferme Goderre, St-Valérien
Jacques Lafortune, St-Roch de L'achigan
Alain Pouliot, Compton
Gilles Pelletier & F. Duparc, Ste-Luce
Raphaël Guentert, St-Simon
Rene Bessette, Waterville
Donald Leclerc, St-Basile
Gaston Ruel, Ferme Nando, Plessisville
Sylvain Ouellet, Ferme Ciboulette, St-Pierre Lamy
Richard Bilodeau, Ferme Bilori, Issoudun
Stéphane Côté, Ferme Côté & Fils, Cacouna
Ferme Laplante, Ste-Hélène
Ferme Luc & Michel Lampron, St-Sévère

PATLQ Advisor

Lyne Brodeur
Denis St-Amant
Mélissa Grandmont
Lyne Brodeur
François Lemaire
Martin Gravel
Karine Chenard
Carole Laliberté
Martin Gravel
Richard Pellerin
Martin Côté
Mathieu Gagnon
Francine Roussin
Damien Lévesque
Judith Francoeur
Simon Smith

Culling

Cows are culled too early

In 2004-2005, nearly 1600 dairy producers took advantage of the specialized training session *Make Money Producing Milk*, offered jointly by PATLQ and the Fédération des groupes conseils agricoles du Québec. This course allows farm managers to conduct a complete survey of the financial consequence of their daily management decisions. Let us take a look at one of the most critical aspect of dairy farm profitability: culling.

Au Québec, si l'on excepte le Putting aside the abnormal industry context since the summer of 2003, the average calving age for Quebec dairy cows has been close to 50 months for the last 20 years. Ten years prior to that, it was around 60 months (graph 1). With age at first calving currently at 28 months, the average Quebec cow has not yet ended her second lactation. With a culling rate in the neighbourhood of 30%, our average cow will be culled soon after her third lactation.

Additionally, a typical cow gives only 75% of her optimal output during her first lactation and 90% during her second. It's only with her third lactation that she is considered fully mature (table 1). In financial terms, her rearing costs are barely, if at all, covered by her first lactation. At the end of the second lactation, we are just entering "four digit" profit. So, culling a cow at her third lactation is like killing the Goose with the Golden Eggs. This cow has just begun to be profitable!

Table 1. Increase in milk yield according to lactation

Lactation	1	2	3
Peak production (kg/jour)	30,1	35,9	39,4

Early culling is clearly a mistake. Why then do so many producers continue to make such unprofitable decisions? (This is true not only in

by Jean Brisson, agr.

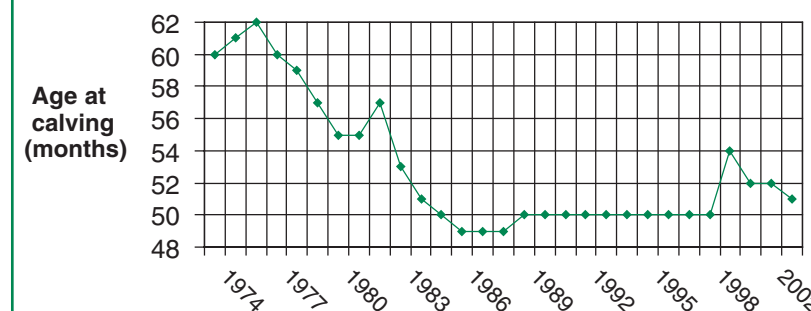


Quebec but can also be observed in France and in the USA...). The reasons are complex. On one hand, we have fine, healthy heifers, whose genetic make-up is probably slightly superior to that of the average cow currently in production. On the other hand, we have health problems. With the dramatic decline in the use of pastures over the last 20 years, a lot of cows now spend twelve months a year in the barn. If sanitary conditions are not optimal, if the milking system or milking method is slightly inadequate, if living space is too cramped, you end up with several cases of mastitis, lameness, etc. So, this five or six year old cow, with only three completed lactations is already dragging. Culling seems to be the obvious solution. But have we taken the time to calculate the true cost? Would it not be more profitable to take better care of these fine cows and thus keep them around longer?

In his recent speech to the General Meeting of Holstein Québec, Bertrand Farmer, agronomist, General Manager of PATLQ, pointed to the urgent need to change our culling habits. We should target a culling rate of no more than 25%, for a minimum of four completed lactations, meaning three profitable ones.

Be sure to discuss this with your advisor. Training sessions like *Make Money Producing Milk* can be highly profitable, but only if you set real targets and make proper management decisions afterwards.

Graphique 1. Average calving age, 1974 to 2003
(dairy cow herds enrolled with PATLQ)



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