

valacta

Dairy Knowledge at your fingertips

What can the Transition Cow Index™ do for you?

DANIEL LEFEBVRE, Ph.D.agr.
General Manager and Manager
of R&D, Valacta



Have you given any thought on how you manage the transition period in your herd lately? Do you find yourself doing damage control in times of crisis, after having failed to notice that a few cows were suffering from displaced abomasum, milk fever, or weren't producing?

YES? – ALL OF THE ABOVE?

It's true that until 2010, it wasn't easy to quantify the success of the transition phase but there is no more excuses now! Unless you're not a Valacta client of course! If you are, you have access to a unique tool designed specifically to help you evaluate your management of the transition period. It's called the TCI™

The tool is based on the premise that milk yield on the first test of a lactation is a reliable indicator of a successful transition. It's quite obvious, however, that in and of itself, the amount of milk produced is subject to far too many causes of variation to adequately reflect cow health during the transition period. I invite you to discover the TCI™.



TCI™ takes into consideration to predict milk production for the current lactation

- the cow's last lactation's milk production
- age
- number of lactations
- number of days dry
- previous lactation's last test somatic cell count
- and more



SUMMARY

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Interview between a producer and TCI™

→→ PRODUCER FIRST, HOW DO YOU WORK?

TCI™ I calculate the difference between the first test projection and the prediction based on historical factors. If I show a negative value, obtained when the first test projection is lower than expected production, it indicates that your cow is not starting lactation as anticipated and it's likely that transition has something to do with it. That means that each cow is compared with herself rather than with a standard value for a particular population. For example, if, based on past records, you expect a cow to produce 10,000 kg during her current lactation, but projected production at her first test date is only 9,000 kg, that cow will have a TCI™ of -1,000 kg, which suggests the transition period didn't go as well as it could have. Conversely, if her first test projection is 12,000 kg, her TCI™ will be +2,000 kg, indicating that, on the whole, the transition period was a success.

TCI equation developed with the data of 500,000 cows in 4,000 herds



→→ PRODUCER I HEARD YOU CAN PREDICT MY COWS' CHANCES OF SURVIVAL?

TCI™ Yes! And chances are those chances will be higher with my prediction!

I am an excellent indicator of a cow's chances of survival to the next lactation. As you can see on the graph below, a cow with a TCI™ of 0 has about a two-in-three chance of calving again, which roughly corresponds to the average culling rate. By comparison, a cow that has gone through a difficult transition period and has a TCI™ of -5,000 has only a one-in-three chance of remaining in the herd until the next lactation. Conversely, a cow that has an easy transition and gets off to a roaring start with a TCI™ of +5,000 has an excellent chance of coming back for a subsequent lactation. The number of cows that leave the herd before 60 days in milk is another indicator of the success or failure of the transition period. And the trend is exactly the same when we look at the relationship between the TCI™ and survival to 60 days in milk.

Retrospective validation studies have shown that an increase in the TCI has a positive effect on subsequent production. In fact, milk production during lactation is found to increase by 1.27 kg for every one-point increase in the TCI. That means that a cow with a TCI of +1,000 kg will produce 1,270 kg more on average than a cow with a TCI of 0. This further demonstrates the importance of the transition period in relation with productivity.

→→ PRODUCER WILL YOU HELP ME WITH THE HEALTH OF MY HERD?

TCI™ -Of course, and I'll tell you my secret: rapid detection!

The transition phase is critical with regard to health problems. It is estimated that three out of four health problems occur during the first 30 days after calving. I will provide you an accurate picture of health problems in early lactation. In fact, a retrospective comparison of the TCI™ of cows that experienced health problems related to calving with that of cows that remained healthy showed that I'm very sensitive to health problems. Indeed, a difference of over 1,200 kg was observed between healthy cows and those diagnosed with ketosis. For cows that suffered displaced abomasum, the gap widened to more than 2,000 kg. Why don't you use me again?

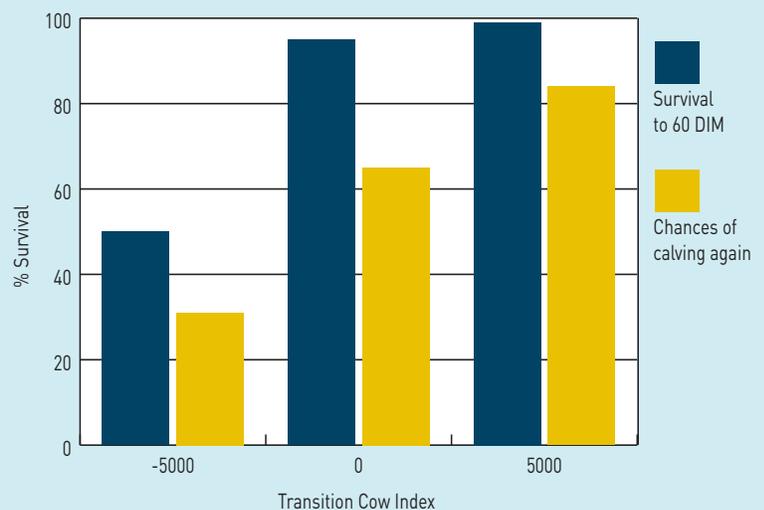
→→ PRODUCER WHAT INFORMATION IS IN YOUR VALACTA REPORT?

TCI™ First, you have to know it looks like a dashboard for the transition period. The key elements of this panel are my Index, the protein-to-fat ratio of cows in early lactation (as an index of the risk of subclinical ketosis), the number of cows culled before 60 days in milk as well as all your cows with a first test cell count over 200,000. With an instrument panel like this, you will have a better control of the transition period, that's for sure!

→→ PRODUCER WHAT DO I DO TO GET YOU?

TCI™ It's easy, ask your Valacta technician!

CHANCES OF SURVIVAL TO 60 DAYS AND OF CALVING AGAIN BASED ON THE TRANSITION COW INDEX



CONTACT VALACTA CUSTOMER SERVICE

1-800-266-5248



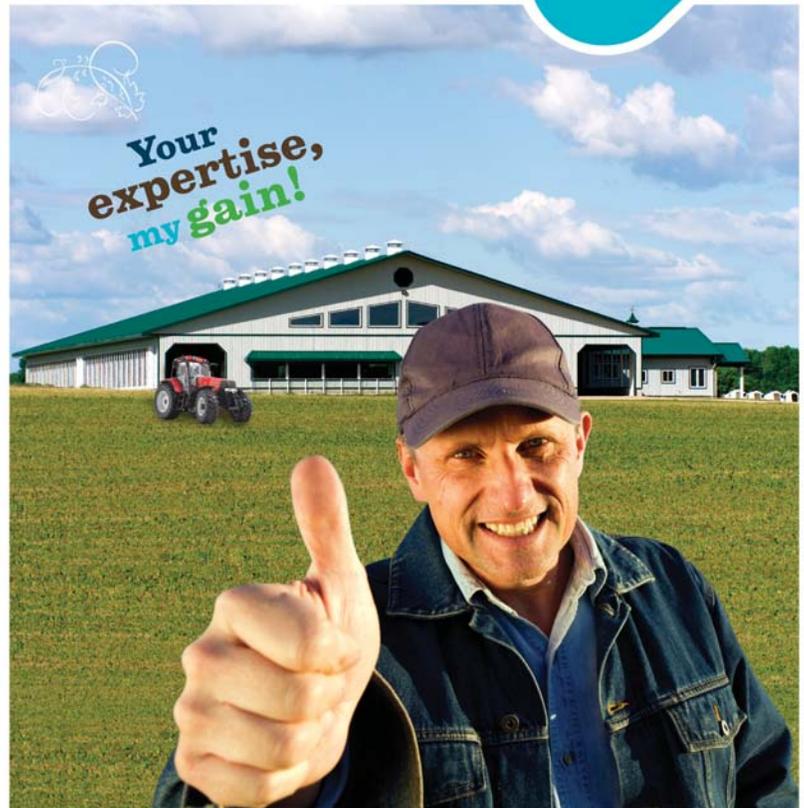
Huge thanks

to Paul Gaunce
who was Observer
on Valacta's board
of directors since 2008.



A warm welcome

to Denis Cyr, who is
the new observer
on our board.
Mr. Cyr is on the board
of the Dairy Farmers
of New-Brunswick
Association.



THE EVOLUTION OF VALACTA ATLANTIC DAIRY PRODUCTION **2012**

Distributed to all Atlantic dairy producers

It's also available on our web site along
with the complete list of publishable herds
for all 4 provinces.

SPECIAL ATLANTIC

Dairy Knowledge at your fingertips

SPECIAL EDITION- SPRING 2013

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Dairy Production Centre of Expertise

Editing and Publishing: Annik Perron, Communication Manager,
Collaboration on this edition: Daniel Lefebvre, Ph.D, General Manager
and Manager of R&D.

Phone: 1-800-BON-LAIT, 514-459-3030 • **Fax:** 514-459-3020

www.valacta.com

E-mail: Dairy Knowledge: info@valacta.com
Customer Service: service.clientele@valacta.com

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