

FOCUS ON PERFORMANCE, EFFICIENCY IMPROVE PARLOR PROFITABILITY

What is my parlor operating cost?
Labor cost? Labor efficiency?

I was recently asked these and other questions by a client trying to reduce operating costs.



Due to low milk prices, he wanted my opinion about implementing changes in the milking routine and milking process.

Understandably, many dairy producers are trying to cut costs – any way and place they can. However, before making any drastic decisions, it is important to have a good knowledge of parlor operating costs, performance and efficiency.

Excel at monitoring parlor performance, productivity, efficiency and operating cost.

The saying that “you can’t manage some-

thing that you can’t measure” is true for good parlor management decisions. By closely and periodically monitoring parlor performance and efficiency, you can:

- 1. Better evaluate the potential impact** of any management change (going from 3X to 2X milking in a low group).
- 2. Better evaluate your current** parlor operating process, efficiency and profitability.
- 3. Motivate change** among employees by showing parlor and milking shift data.

It is important to identify periodic parlor monitoring parameters used to define or implement key performance indicators, make management changes to improve parlor productivity and profitability, and communicate with employees to set up goals and expectations.

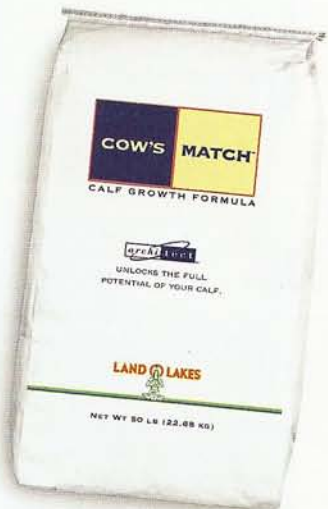
What should be monitored?

Keep things simple, but at the same time obtain the necessary information to help make

better decisions. Performance indicators should be related to productivity, efficiency and profitability. Parameters I encourage my clients to monitor weekly and monthly include:

1. Cows per hour/turns per hour. A major component of parlor efficiency and labor productivity, it is determined by the number of cows milked per hour or the times each side is filled in one hour. A typical benchmark is four turns per hour, with a goal of five turns per hour. However, this target may vary depending on the type of parlor, number of employees and other parameters. Work with your consultant and parlor manager to define benchmarks and goals. Once you establish these numbers, monitor them periodically and communicate with your employees about how things are going.

2. Milk flow in the first 15 seconds and first 30-60 seconds. Useful as monitors of milk letdown and udder preparation, these parameters allow the parlor manager to evaluate proper par-



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