

The automation of data collection from on farm software

T. Craven¹, H-J van der Beek²

¹ *National Milk Records plc, Greenways Business Park, Chippenham, SN15 1BN, UK*

² *Uniform-Agri, Oostersingel 23, 9401 JZ, Assen, The Netherlands*

Abstract

With ever growing herd sizes, the collection of milk recording data from larger farms is an issue that is being faced by all milk recording organisations (MRO). With more automation on farm and a general improvement in the quality of records held on farm, the need had arisen for the automatic transfer of data from on farm software to the MRO. The primary data collection method for National Milk Records (NMR) in the UK is via the milk recorders laptop. As the world gets more connected, the dairy industry should not fall behind and therefore should avail of the opportunity to use these connections to get data moving.

In light of this NMR has undertaken a major project to aid the flow of data from farm and simplify the process of milk recording. NMR is working in partnership with suppliers of herd management software, including Uniform-Agri, to deliver a package that works for both the farmer and the MRO. We think that this data transfer mechanism will become the most important data collection method for NMR in the near future.

The system works by the use of web services using XML files to transfer all the events recorded on farm. This data is then passed through the standard milk recording rules to ensure a high level of data quality with warnings and errors being based back to the originating software. The data transfer is setup to happen once a day.

The 2nd part of this project is the automatic transfer of data from NMR back to the herd management software. Farmers who use farm based management software tend to use that software as their main source of information, so the ability to feed this data back to their management program should provide greater visibility of the data provided by a milk recording organisation. As we move into new areas of testing, such as genomics or disease testing, this reporting route will be essential for the farmer.

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