

## Opportunities and challenges in accurate milk recording on farm in the United States

Miles Asha<sup>[1]</sup>, Fourdraine Robert<sup>[1]</sup>

[1] DRMS

In this paper we describe the changing dairy landscape in the US, including adoption of new on-farm technologies and the subsequent evolution in milk recording that we are observing.

There is monumental variation in what dairying looks like in the United States. Dairy herds range in size from small family farms (<50 cows) to large enterprises milking 10,000+ cows in multiple locations. They operate in vastly different climate conditions, use different levels of technology, have multiple dairy breeds, are influenced by different subcultures, and farmers are paid on different milk pricing schemes. With such variation in dairy practices, it's challenging to apply a "one size fits all" solution to accurate milk recording while maintaining efficiencies and minimal disruptions to on farm management. Yet, in any system, high quality information services begin with accurate data entry on the farm. In this paper we describe the changing dairy landscape in the US, including adoption of new on-farm technologies and the subsequent evolution in milk recording that we are observing. Serving the diverse needs while at the same time addressing a shortage in labor requires new solutions to facilitate accurate and efficient milk recording on farm. One such solution is in automating data entry on a test day and employing new technologies that minimize the need for manual or handwritten data entry, reducing labor costs and human error while minimizing disruption of farm operations. These automated methods will become increasingly important as herd size in the US continues to increase and we see more complicated milk testing plans emerge – herds that only test part of their herd, or herds that are managed as a group but located across multiple milking sites with different parlor types, or herds that have milking strings that are milked on different frequencies. Education and outreach of farm owners, herd managers, and DHI technicians will remain critical to adapting existing milk recording systems to changing dairy practices.