

# What do farmers expect from our field staff today and five years hence?

Suzanne Harding  
Business Development Executive  
Holstein UK  
Cattle Information Services  
Centre of Dairy Information



Slide 1



# Overview

1. Cattle Information Service (CIS)
2. Why do farmers milk record?
3. What is the farmers MRO expectation?
4. Recorders Historic Role
5. Current recorders role
6. What has changed and why?
7. Recorder's future roles
8. Will we still need recorders in the future?



Slide 2



# Overview

1. Cattle Information Service (CIS)



Slide 3



# Holstein UK group of companies



Slide 4



# Cattle Information Services (CIS)

- Milk recording began in Scotland 100 years ago
- The Scottish Milk Marketing Board evolved into Livestock Services
- CIS was formed in 2000 as a joint venture between Holstein UK and First Milk
- In July 2002, CIS became a wholly owned subsidiary of Holstein UK
- In April 2003, CIS launched its' new milk recording system
- CIS is run by farmers, and profits are put back into development to benefit the farmer
- Development of a farmers website so farmer can view his own data and manage his herd
- 2007 CIS continues to launch world class web tools
- CIS milk record 45% of cows in the United Kingdom



Slide 5



# Overview

1. Cattle Information Service (CIS)
2. Why do farmers milk record?



Slide 6



## Why do farmers Milk Record?

- Historically Milk Recording was seen to be:
  - Cow management
  - An aid to market cows
  - A way to make more profit
  - Way to compete with neighbours
- What's changed?
  - Financial pressures - Farms must now be managed efficiently
  - Management requirements
  - Higher efficiency
  - Consumer Demand - Designer Milk
  - Latest technologies - World wide web – computers in the home
  - Total Traceability
  - Health and Welfare - The need for better record keeping on farm
    - Cell Counts - Give the ability to view individual cell counts
    - Urea
    - Fertility



Slide 7



## Challenges UK Farmers face today

- Shortage of help on farm
  - Labour costly
  - Use recorder to input data
- Income / expenditure
  - Milk price low / no subsidies
  - Factoring – cheaper option
  - 6 and 8 weekly milk recording
  - Cell count only services
- Herd management / profitability
  - Real time data entry on the web site
  - Single entry / multiple use
  - Saves time as no duplication of effort
  - Tools to aid management decisions
- Increased legislative pressure from government
  - Official Passports / movements via CIS website
  - Farm assurance



Slide 8



## True DIY recording

- Farmer inputs weights and events on the web
  - Data immediately available
  - Real time management tools
  - Web reports
- Farmer takes samples
  - Sends samples to laboratory
  - Samples are analysed at laboratory
  - Results are sent to MRO over Internet
  - Yields matched with results from Laboratory
  - Text message sent to farmer stating that results are ready
  - Farmer views milk recording results on web
  - Benefits for farmer include cost and convenience
- MRO must have additional checks in place
  - Automatic bulk / yield comparisons
  - Check weights
  - BUT no independent body recording on farm



Slide 9

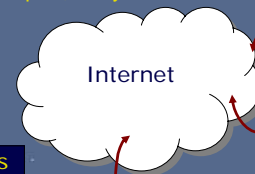


## Milk Recording Today

- Required: Speed, Accuracy, Validation
- Key: Web Infrastructure
- Turnaround: Daily transport, Daily transfer

CIS  
Average  
Turnaround  
3.5 days

Recorders  
Field  
Program



Data  
Validation

Lab



Slide 10



## Overview

- Cattle Information Service (CIS)
- Why do farmers milk record?
- Recorders Historic Role



Slide 11



## Recorders Historic Role

- On farm
  - Analyse butterfat on farm
  - Weigh the milk with steel yards
  - Hand write everything in duplicate
  - Compute all calculations without any electronic devices
- Skill set had to include
  - Competent at driving a pony and trap
  - Skilled with centrifuge for butterfat testing
- If a herd was above 40 cows, the operation would take two days



Slide 12



## Recorders transport 50 years ago



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Slide 13

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Slide 14

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## Recorders transport today



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Slide 15

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## What tools do recorders use today?

- High levels of bio security
  - New pots with bronopol preservative
  - Washable plastic trays
- Mobile Office
  - Mobile phones
  - Laptop and printer
  - Barcode Reader
  - E-mail
  - Bespoke software using web services over the Internet

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## Recorders 'mobile office'



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## What tools do recorders use today?

- Recorders have to be trained to use the latest technology as this makes their jobs easier and makes them more efficient.
- Good support infrastructure is essential
- Future
  - increased use of PDAs / mobile phone software
  - Bluetooth / Infrared printing directly from phone to printer
  - Would need good GPS coverage even in remote areas
  - Farm WI-FI
  - 'Web 'n walk'

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## Recorders need to be flexible

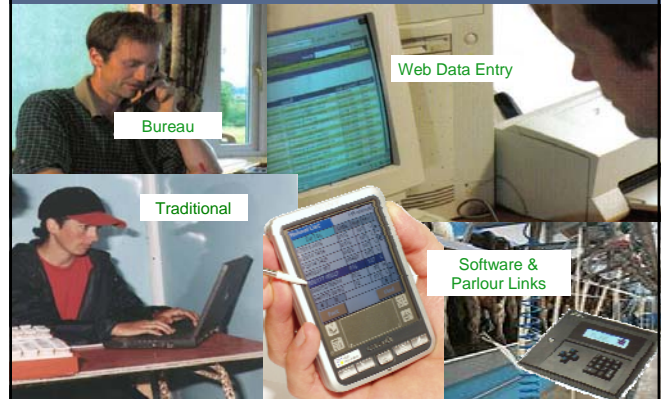
- Service between 1 and 30 farms a month (Average 14)
- Herd size range is 15 to 1100 cows (Average 154)
- Travel mileage 1 to 115 miles (Average 20)
- Milking systems range from rotary to robot (Mainly herringbone)
- Milking times from ½ to 6 hours (Average 1 hour per 100 cows)
- Speed - immediate printouts, quick analysis
- Area managers
  - service 600 customers
  - web interactive man-management
- Green foot print
  - paperless systems
- Flexible data entry
  - 18% web
  - 23% software
  - 59% manual



Slide 19



## Data Collection Options



## Current Recorders Role

- For the MRO
  - Download data from internet
  - Visit farm afternoon and following morning (once on factoring)
  - Take milk samples (once on factoring)
  - Collect milk weights and event data (if not input by farmer)
    - services
    - fertility
    - calvings
    - health
    - left herd
  - Deliver samples to laboratories or collection points
  - Data may be exported from auto parlours or farm management programmes into the recorders program
  - Upload data over internet



Slide 21



## Current Recorders Role

- For the Farmer
  - Variety of Reports left on farm
    - Action lists
    - Yields and events
    - Youngstock list
  - Feed calculation
    - Grouping by days calved, milk yield, calving month or lactation
    - Tailored to farmers requirements
    - Reports left on farm
- For other Organisations
  - Data collection
  - DNA sample collection



Slide 22



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Slide 23



## Why Have Recording Methods Progressed?

- 1903 – 1970
  - Farms recorded out of pride
- 1970's
  - Farms had to meet buyer standards, milk samples started to be sent to laboratories, protein analysed.
- 1980's
  - SCC testing introduced, milk life doubled
- 1990's
  - Devolution opened the new world of competition



Slide 24



## The Result

- The 21<sup>st</sup> Century
  - Recording costs halved, with no government funding
  - Milk routinely analysed for butterfat, protein, urea & SCC
  - Production diseases, Johnes, IBR, Lepto & BVD monitored
  - High bio security measures
  - Milk buyer constraints
  - Use of the world wide web = speed
  - Recorders spend the same time on farm but herd size has doubled in 20 years
  - Milk recording has become **the** herd management system



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Slide 25



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Slide 26



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## Recorders Possible Future Roles

- Farmers are requesting an end to duplication
  - Web/software tools end the need for recorder input
- Labour Shortage
  - Larger herd size & faster parlours – need for recorder to take milk samples
- Additional MRO Services
  - Recorders analysing milk on farm
  - Selling MRO services to new customers
- Additional services for farmer
  - Collect more data on all aspects of farm management
  - Sampling expanded to spill analysis etc
  - Role in farm assurance
  - Breeding advice
- For other Organisations
  - Data collection



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## Recorders Possible Future Roles

- Limiting factors
  - Need people willing to work unsocial hours
  - Distribution of farms - increasingly scattered
  - Fitness – demand of large parlours
  - Increase in the technical skill set required to do the job
  - Knowledge of corporate business and aims
  - Cost to MRO
    - Recorders tend to be low paid
    - Additional expectations = additional cost
  - Financial burden would be passed back to farmers



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Slide 28



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Slide 29



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## Will we need Recorders?

### YES

- Where farmers need additional help inputting herd management data and analysing milk, etc due to lack of resource on farm.
- An increasingly important role for independent on-farm data collection

### BUT

- Some farmers will insist on a true DIY system, benefits including cost and convenience



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Slide 30



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Thank You



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Slide 31

