



From science to practice – improved udder health with the German project

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and Quality Testing (DLQ)*

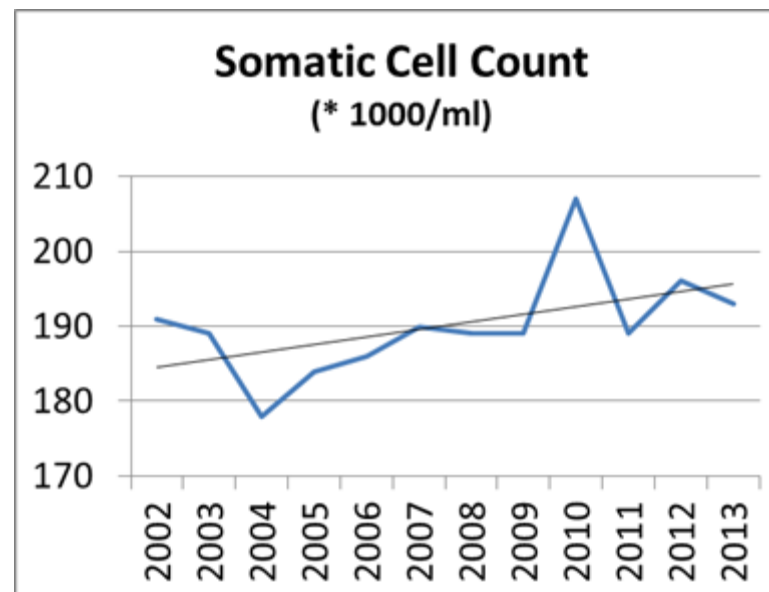
Milk recording in Germany

2003:

- 3.6 million cows
- 76,600 dairy farms
- 47 cows/herd
- 7,355 kg milk

2013:

- 3.6 million cows milk recorded (4.2 million in total)
- 53,000 dairy farms (80.000 in total)
- 69 cows/herd
- 8,221 kg milk/cow/year



2013:

- Productive life span: 36.6 months – **too short**
- 21-25% of cows reach fourth lactation – **too few**
- Udder diseases: second most common reason for culling (14.3%) – **too high**

2007:

- Clinical mastitis: every second cow affected once per lactation – **too many**



Animal Welfare

- DLQ: We need an overall strategy to improve udder health
 - sustainably
 - on a national level

The milchQplus logo, identical to the one in the top right corner.

- May 2012 – December 2015
- Budget: 1.4 million Euros
- Funding:
 - public funding (Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture)
 - DLQ member organisations

With support from



by decision of the
German Bundestag

Project partners & network



German Association for Performance and Quality Testing (DLQ), Bonn



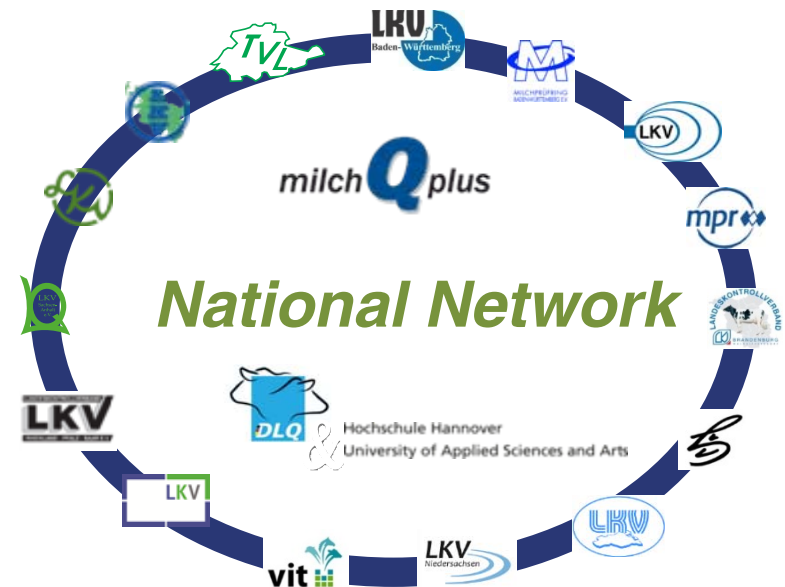
Microbiology Group, University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Hannover



12 milk recording organisations
2 associations for raw milk testing
1 IT solutions for animal production



53,000 dairy farms





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Aims
&
Contents



Reduce complexity by a well structured approach!
Search for farm specific udder health bottleneck(s)!

Three Main Objectives

Objective 2

Identifying dairy cattle with incurable chronic mastitis by DSCC



Objective 1

Establishing key figures for udder health using Dairy Herd Improvement (DHI) data

Objective 3

Improving communication between stakeholder



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Objective 1:
Key Figures



Aims

- Continuous monitoring of udder health at **herd level**
- ↳ **Early warning system**
- ↳ **Prevention** instead of treatment
- Objectively measurable figures instead of gut feeling
- Control of measures
- Goal setting
- ↳ Part of **strategic optimisation** of udder health

Approach

- All key figures calculated from SCC results of the individual cows at the monthly herd test
- Supplied monthly on paper and/or online as part of the established herd test report
- ↳ 53.000 farms = 86% of German dairy cows



Lactation

- (1) Proportion of cows with healthy udders
- (2) Rate of chronically diseased cows with poor cure prospects
- (3) Rate of newly diseased animals during lactation

Dry period

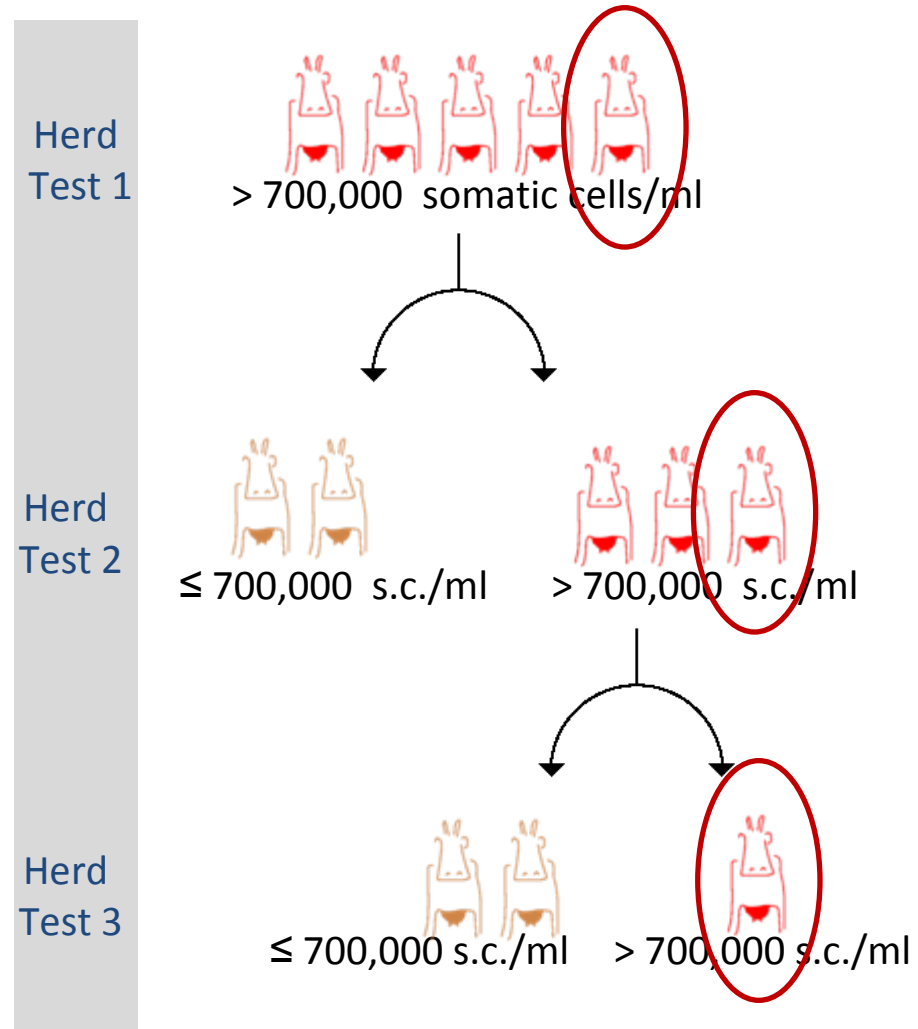
- (4) New infection rate in the dry period
- (5) Cure rate in the dry period
- (6) Rate of heifer mastitis

(2) Proportion of chronically diseased animals with poor cure prospects

Definition

Proportion of animals with $> 700,000$ somatic cells/ml each in the last three milk recordings of all currently lactating animals.

Average = 5%
Top $\leq 1\%$



Benchmarking

Benchmarking figures

- Calculated from top 25% farms
- For each key figure
- On a regional basis
- Updated at least monthly

Aim

- Comparison to see
 - Where do I stand?
 - What do top farms achieve?
- ➔ Motivation to improve udder health on own farm



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Objective 3: Improved
Communication



- Communication between stakeholders on farm
 - ➔ Key to bring udder health forward

- Interviews across Germany with
 - Farmers *What motivates farmers?*
 - Veterinarians *What are the risk factors for udder health?*
 - Consultants

- Workshops for consultants and milk recording personnel
 - Technical expertise (key figures)
 - General communication skills



Thank you!

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