

2013 Herd Profitability Reviews



By Teresa Hanson, B.S.

Each herd that starts on the Crystal Creek® Dairy Nutrition Model (CCDNM) has their own set of goals that they would like to achieve. For some herds, they would like to see better reproduction and overall herd health. For others, it may be better

milk production or increased components. One common denominator expressed among herds is the desire for overall improved farm profitability. In 2013, I worked with two herds in Northwestern Wisconsin to complete a thorough herd review comparing all aspects of the dairy ranging from veterinary bills to overall milk production. Below are some snapshots of the herd reviews and the information we gleaned during the review process.

Herd #1

This herd, located in Northwestern Wisconsin, switched onto the CCDNM in January of 2012 for several reasons. Two of the main reasons they switched were to address reproduction and herd health. Prior to working with Crystal Creek®, they used additives in the ration to mask feed imbalances and treated several fresh cows with phosphorus enema kits to cope with phosphorus milk fevers. Below is a comparison of their herd health and reproduction, prior to, and after working with, Crystal Creek®.

VET COSTS FOR LACTATING COWS	
2011 (Year Prior to CC)	\$7,704.50
2012	\$4,224.21
2013	\$3,487.50
Savings/Herd/Year on CCDNM (2011 vs. 2013)	\$4,217.00
Savings/Cow/Year on CCDNM	\$18
* This producer stated that they have had no DA's and no clinical ketosis on their Fleckvieh cows. They also stated they have only had 2 milk fevers since they started on the CCDNM.	

BREEDING			
	December 2011 Prior to CC	January 2013	Advantage on CCDNM
Services Per Conception	2.4	2.2	0.20 lower services per conception
Pregnancy Rate*	17%	20%	3% higher pregnancy rate
Calving Interval	13.6%	12.8%	0.80 decreased calving interval
* A conservative estimate for a pregnancy rate increase of 3% equals an increased return per cow of \$100. For this herd milking 230 cows, that is an increased return of \$23,000. Some research shows that the increased return per cow is double that.			

HERD PROFITABILITY	
Increased Pregnancy Rate	\$23,000.00
Veterinary Bill Savings	\$4217.00
Ration Savings	\$165,199.00
Milk Income Loss*	-\$113,333.00
Profit/230 Cows/Year	\$79,083.00
Profit/Cow/Year	\$343.84
* Milk production had decreased due to feed quality issues, the presence of mycotoxins, sub-clinical ketosis and heat stress. Feed quality and quantity had decreased due to the last two years of drought in northwestern Wisconsin.	

As this herd continues to move forward on the CCDNM, the producer and I have laid out a game plan to make their herd even more profitable. Focusing on transition cows is the first priority. Over the last year this herd has dealt with poor quality forages, paired with a high level of mycotoxins. The poor quality, and the low quantity, of forages

in this herd resulted from two years of drought in Northwestern Wisconsin. Ideally, having headlocks installed in their fresh pen would aid in being able to easily identify fresh cow challenges as well as being able to administer transition cow health aids when needed. Better transition cow management=less problems and more milk=more profit. The second priority is to check the accuracy of the TMR mixing process. Scales have been checked for accuracy, especially for low inclusion ingredients. The TMR ingredient mixing sequence is also being evaluated to make sure ingredients are being distributed evenly throughout the entire TMR. This farm has been very good at communicating with me when changes are needed. A "Weekly Update Form" was created for the producers to fill out and send to me each Monday for even better communication. This form gives me all of the information needed to keep this herd on track. I am extremely grateful to be able to work with this herd and be able to achieve their herd goals year after year. They are a great family and I look forward to working with them in the future.

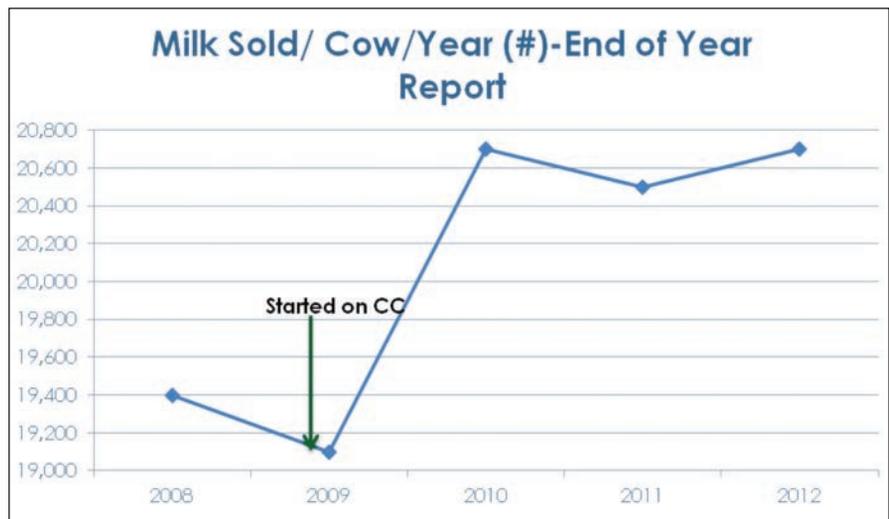
Herd #2

This herd is also located in Northwestern Wisconsin. Herd #2 was milking 150 cows when Crystal Creek® started working with them in 2009. The family recently built new facilities where they now milk over 200 cows. Poor herd health and poor communication with their previous nutritionist led them to Crystal Creek®. Milk production had been dropping slowly, the vet bills had started to increase, and they realized a need for change. Since 2009 this herd has been very dedicated to the CCDNM.

They have been happy with the progress in overall herd health and the lowered feed bills. With the expansion of their facilities this year, and the drought stressed crops over the last two years, this producer was forced by their banker into

thinking they needed more milk in order to get more profit. At the time of this review, two of the four people working on this farm were frustrated and wanted 80# of milk per head per day (they were currently at 73#). The charts below illustrate the presentation that was given to the herd owners.

SOMATIC CELL COUNT			
	2008 Prior to CC	2009 to Present	Advantage on CCDNM
Somatic Cell Count	211	168	*43
* That is an overall reduction in somatic cell count of 21% on a herd-wide basis.			

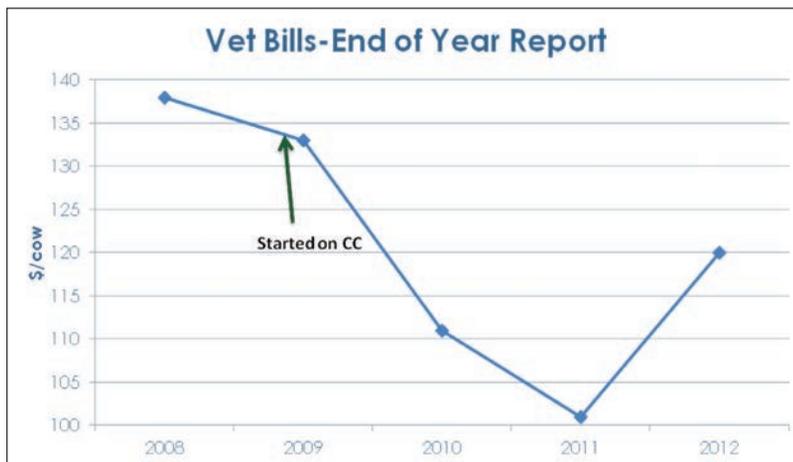


MILK INCOME ECONOMICS			
	2008 Prior to CC	2012	Advantage on CCDNM
Rolling Herd Average (#)	19,400	20,700	
Increased Milk #/Cow/Year			1,300
Increased Milk #/150 Cows/Year			195,000
Increased Profit/150 Cows/Year*			\$35,100
* Estimated at \$18/cwt. Milk was not fat corrected.			

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2013 HERD PROFITABILITY REVIEWS

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)



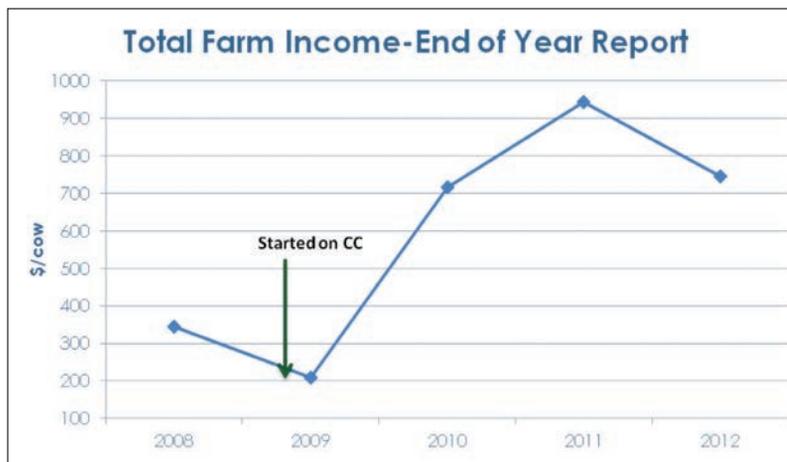
OVERALL INCREASED PROFIT (2008 vs. 2012)

Increased Milk	\$35,100
Vet Bills Savings	\$2,700
Decreased Calving Interval	\$7,500
Total Increased Profit/ 150 cows/year	\$45,300
Total Increased Profit/ Cow/Year	\$302

VET BILL SAVINGS

	2008 Prior to CC	2012	Advantage on CCDNM
Total Vet Bill \$/cow/year	\$138	\$120	
Decreased Vet Bill \$/cow/year			\$18
Decreased Vet Bill \$/150 cows/ year			\$2,700

* In 2011, the Vet Bill was down to \$101/cow/year. The increase in 2012 was due to the poorer quality forages and the implementation of a herd reproduction synchronization program.



CALVING INTERVAL ECONOMICS

	2008 Prior to CC	2012	Advantage on CCDNM
Calving Interval (months)	15.4	13.7	1.7
Increased Profit/Cow/Year*			\$50
Increased Profit/150 cows/Year*			\$7,500

* Research shows that this decreased calving interval is a \$50/cow/year improved profit.

TOTAL FARM INCOME ECONOMICS

	2008 Prior to CC	2012	Advantage on CCDNM
Total Farm Income/Cow/Year	\$344	\$745	\$401
Total Farm Income/150 cows/Year	\$51,600	\$111,750	\$60,150

* In 2011, total increased profit/cow/year was \$600 or an increased profit of \$90,000/150 cows/year as compared to 2008.

By the end of the presentation, this farm family clearly saw that they were on the right path, but there were still things that needed to improve. The action plan revolved around increasing milk production by focusing on cow and forage management, rather than increasing out of pocket ration expenses with costly supplements. The first goal was to determine feed quantity. As with Herd #1, Herd #2 also experienced the drought two years in a row and were short on good quality forages. Once we determined forage quantity, we had an idea of how much purchased hay was

needed. Good quality hay was bought, the TMR was tested for mycotoxins, and the ration was adjusted to meet proper requirements. The TMR test showed a low level of aflatoxin so Fuse 207™ was inserted into the ration at 2 oz./head/day. The next step on the action plan was to test the early lactation cows for ketosis using the Precision Xtra meter. Out of eight cows tested, 50% of them had ketosis. The industry goal is to have less than 10% ketosis in your herd. A fresh cow pen was recommended and implemented to help address the high level of ketosis in the herd. After cows

calve, the cows are put into the fresh pen where they can be easily monitored for intakes and other transition cow issues. Just these few steps on the action plan have increased milk to 79#/head/day (84# fat corrected). There are still steps on the action plan for the future that will help this herd continue to increase their bottom line. This family farm is very pleased with the CCDNM and how it helped them meet their goals, and significantly improve their profitability.

What are your goals for 2014? Has your nutrition program helped you reach your herd health, production, and profitability goals? If you would like to have one of the Crystal Creek® Dairy Nutritionists help you evaluate your current ration and herd health, please call 1-888-376-6777. We are here to help you reach your goals!

“Ask the Vet and Ask the Nutritionist”



Producers can submit their questions regarding animal health and nutrition and selected questions will be answered in our Cow Tales newsletters. Remember, if you have a question, it is likely other farmers share the same question or are dealing with the same issue. All submissions will remain confidential. Please submit your animal health or nutrition questions in writing to:

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