



Modified Requirements for Official Information Due to Covid-19

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In April 2020, the Industry Standards Committee of Lactanet Canada proposed recommendations allowing greater flexibility in the requirements for publishable lactations and official genetic indexes for production traits. These recommendations, which were approved by the Lactanet Board of Directors, aimed to recognize the unavoidable impact of Covid-19 on milk recording services and to minimize that impact to Canadian dairy producers. As the Covid-19 period continues, and is expected to do so for the foreseeable future, Lactanet will continue to monitor and assess the Covid-19 situation across the country, which is different by region and changes over time. When risks are low and milk recording staff can safely deliver services in person, expectations are that regular testing intervals and supervision occur. The more flexible requirements allowed during the Covid-19 period are intended to limit the negative impact for those times when Lactanet cannot safely deliver services in person.

Publishable Lactations

At Lactanet special programming has been implemented to apply the more flexible requirements for lactations that do not otherwise meet all requirements to achieve official publishability status. Only lactations in herds that were known to be enrolled on a publishable level of milk recording at the time of their latest test during the period from January 1 to March 14, 2020 qualify for this reprocessing due to Covid-19 exceptions. Briefly, the following summarizes the key minimum standards for official publishable lactations that have been modified as part of the special processing due to Covid-19:

- Maximum interval between test days extended from 90 to 110 days.
- Minimum number of herd tests per rolling 12-month has been reduced by two, which becomes 8 instead of 10 for herds on alternating Supervised/Unsupervised or AM/PM testing or becomes 6 tests instead of 8 if enrolled on a 24-hr supervised testing program.
- Minimum Lactation Rating for Protein has been lowered by 5 points to become 90 for lactations reaching at least 305 days in milk (instead of 95), or 85 if the lactation is terminated between 240 and 304 days in milk.
- Test days that would normally have been Supervised but could not be due to Covid-19 no-contact milk recording service restrictions have still been labelled as such even though no supervision was performed.

Within qualifying herds, the lactations that are included in this special processing are those with a test day since March 13, 2020. Depending on the length of time that Covid-19 will continue to affect milk recording services across the country, Lactanet Canada will determine when this special processing for publishable lactations will transition back to the usual minimum standards.

Official Cow Genetic Indexes for Production

The extended interval between test days that resulted in some herds due to the impact of Covid-19 on milk recording services could also impact the official status of cow genetic indexes for production traits. For this reason, starting with the August 2020 genetic evaluation release, Lactanet also implemented temporary modifications of this requirement as outlined in Table 1. Basically, depending on the number of usable test days during the current lactation that are included for the cow's genetic evaluation, the maximum allowable average interval has been extended as required under the scenario where herd testing was reduced as far as 60-day intervals. As for the relaxation of publishable lactation requirements outlined above, Lactanet will also determine the duration of this temporary modification to the requirements for official cow indexes for production traits.

Table 1: Maximum Allowable Average Interval for Test Days Included for Genetic Evaluation - Usual Standards and Covid-19 Exception

No. Usable Tests in Current Lactation	No. Last Two Tests that are 24-hr Supervised		Covid-19 Exception
	Only One	Both	
2	88	104	120
3	63	75	90
4	54	65	80
More than 4	50	60	75

Summary

Lactanet Canada and its Industry Standards Committee understand the challenges that Canadian dairy producers have been facing during the period of time where Covid-19 affects the manner in which milk recording services can be offered by Lactanet field staff. For this reason, the usual requirements for publishable lactations and official cow genetic indexes for production have been modified and applied to cows in herds that were on a publishable milk recording service prior to the start of Covid-19 in March 2020. Although the relaxed requirements are temporary in nature, they

will remain in place for the foreseeable future and then Lactanet will transition back to the usual industry standards.

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