Publishable Lactations and Official Genetic Indexes During COVID-19 Service Disruption

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- Updates & Criteria

Industry Standards Committee, Lactanet Canada
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Background

During the COVID-19 pandemic, routine milk recording services have been significantly disrupted. Service is provided, but on a strict 'No Contact' basis, where most notably, Lactanet staff are not providing on-farm sample collection services, including "Supervised" services that are required for publishable lactations and official cow genetic indexes for production traits. Additionally, many herds are delaying services and test intervals are being significantly extended.

Lactanet Canada and its Industry Standards Committee understand the

challenges that Canadian dairy producers are facing during these challenging times. For this reason, the usual requirements for publishable lactations and official cow genetic indexes for production are being modified during the period of time where COVID-19 affects the manner in which milk recording services can be offered by Lactanet field staff.

Publishable Lactations

To allow for the potentially longer interval between the last test day with sampling before the COVID-19 service restrictions, which was effective March 13, 2020, and the subsequent test day with sampling, the following Publishable Record policies are recommended:

1. Any herd that DOES NOT have a test day with sampling in the period from February 1 to March 13, 2020 must have a test day with component analysis by Friday May 1, 2020.
2. Any herd that DOES have a test day with sampling in the period from February 1 to March 13, 2020 must have another test day with component analysis within 60 days of the last test date or by May 1, 2020 if an interval of 60 days has already passed.
3. Subsequently, herds must have regular tests with component analysis at intervals not exceeding 60 days.

For herds enrolled on a publishable level of milk recording at the most recent test prior to March 13, 2020, the following data processing policies will be applied by Lactanet with the intent of minimizing any impact on publishable lactations and official genetic evaluations for cows:

1. All test days during the COVID-19 period will be coded as “supervised/verified” to simplify the application of minimum “supervised testing” requirements for publishable lactations and official genetic evaluations.
2. All herds where the annual meter verification requirement comes due after March 13, 2020 will manually be marked as ‘Verified’ in the system, which will push the verification date forward by 12 months.

When on-farm service resumes, the manually labelled meter verifications will be performed, on farm, as soon as possible.

3. Minimum requirements applied to the Protein Rating for publishable lactations will be adjusted downward, as necessary, to account for possible longer test intervals and/or reduced component sampling during the COVID-19 period.
4. Minimum requirements related to the number of herd tests per rolling 12-month period and maximum and/or average test day intervals will not be applied for publishable lactations or official genetic indexes for production traits.

It should be noted that all requirements related to herdbook registration (for publishable lactations) and unique identification with known sire (for inclusion in genetic evaluations) will be maintained.

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