Ten New Year’s Resolutions for Improved Farm Management

- January, 29 2024

The winter months are a good time to review the results of the past year and take actions that will improve your quality of life and, why not, the management of your dairy business. Lactanet offers you this list of actions from which you can choose according to the situation and needs of your dairy… and for yourself.

1. Improve forage yield and quality

Yield has a major impact on the cost of forage production, while quality has a major influence on the cost of concentrates in the ration. There are many opportunities to improve both yield and quality, and the two are not necessarily incompatible.



In 2024, take the time to evaluate the performance of your forage system. How do your yields compare to those in the region?

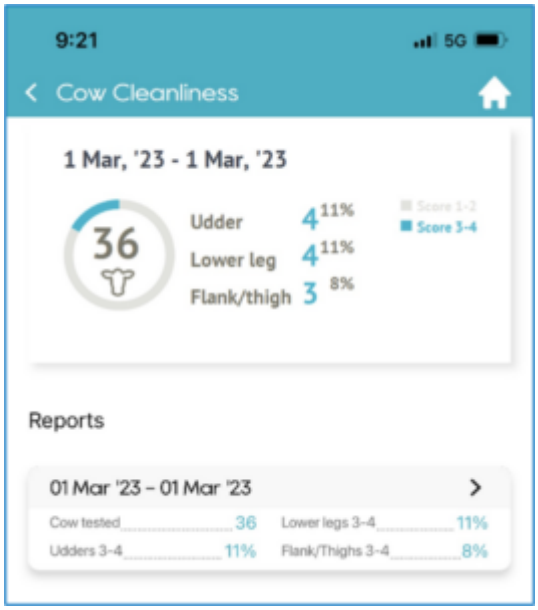
Look at your forage analysis to see if forage quality is optimal: Forage analysis.

2. Measure your herd comfort and welfare

Are changes aiming to improve cow comfort, such as modifications to bedding and stall configuration, having the desired effect?

Use the Lactanet Mobile app to measure changes in comfort by recording the cows' lameness, injury and teat data.

To know more, read the following article: Herd Management: New Features on Lactanet Mobile | Lactanet.



3. Keep an eye on transition cows

A successful lactation begins with rigorous care during the transition period.

Early identification of problems and appropriate interventions can prevent negative consequences that could ripple throughout the lactation.

To find out more, read this article: Transition Period: The Crucial 6 Weeks for Lactation Success | Lactanet.



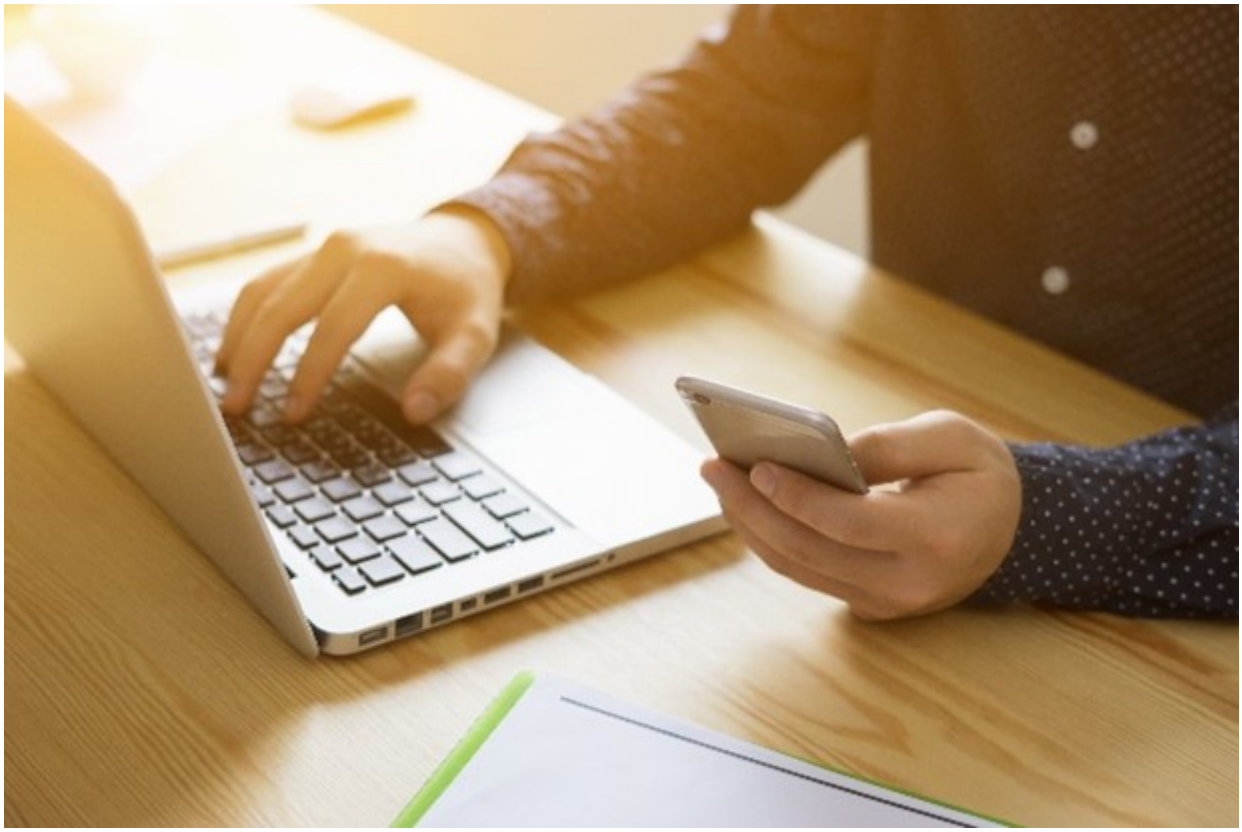
4. Fight rising interest costs

Make sure each of your assets is used to its full potential and profitability.

With current interest rates, and in light of the cost of equipment, cows and buildings, few can afford to haul dead wood.

For the coming year, no effort should be spared: rationalizing assets, partnering to use assets to their full potential, planning livestock and field requirements, and so on.

Discover how to review and prioritize your investments in this report: Rising Expenses and Interest Rates: How Much Can We Control? | Lactanet.



5. Pay attention to rearing costs

A recent study showed that, in Quebec, it costs an average of $4,900 to bring a heifer to first calving.

To help reduce the costs, set the following management objectives:

- Rationalize the number of heifers in the herd. It should not exceed an annual ratio of 0.8 heifers per cow.

- Synchronize first breeding when heifers reach 55% to 60% of their mature weight. Good heifer care should allow this to happen at around 13 months of age.

See the following link for more details: Cost and Profitability of Rearing Programs in Quebec | Lactanet.



6. Focus on biosecurity

Focusing on biosecurity will pay dividends for your business through improved productivity, in addition to benefiting the entire cattle industry.

Work with your veterinarian to review biosecurity measures.

Did you know that Lactanet can test milk samples to detect leucosis and paratuberculosis?

Other biosecurity measures are available here: Cleaning and Disinfection: What's the Difference? | Lactanet.



7. Adopt practices to reduce your farm's GHG emissions

By adopting several combined solutions, every producer can effectively contribute to DFC's goal: Achieving carbon neutrality by 2050.

Take advantage of the winter months to learn about available solutions, from field to barn. Consult DFC's Best Management Practices Guide and register for Lactanet's February 2024 webinars "Let's Talk Sustainability!" to learn even more!

8. Maximizing the efficiency of your robotic milking system

Paying attention to the milking efficiency of your cows and robots can pay big dividends. Lactanet's exclusive robot efficiency indicators can help you do just that.

According to data from robotic farms served by Lactanet, the top 20% of Holstein herds achieve 2.05 kg milk/min at the robot.

This farm report provides strategies for improving robotic milking efficiency: The Lambton Farm Is Aiming for 100 kg of Fat/Day per Robot! | Lactanet.



9. Use the HappyGrass app to manage pastures

HappyGrass is a tool that allows farmers and their advisors to capture and enhance all grazing data from their smartphone or computer.

For more details, read the following article: HappyGrass: A New Application for Pasture Management | Lactanet.



10. Take care of yourself!

Time is not a rubber band that stretches endlessly. If the proposals on our list lead you to carry out new tasks, make sure you get this time back by freeing yourself from other tasks. This can be as simple as changing the way you do things or outsourcing tasks to other people within or outside the company (contract work, contract bookkeeping, giving up breeding, etc.).

Give yourself time to rest. Remember to take time to “disconnect” from the farm, so you can see it in a new light when you return.

We wish you a Happy New Year filled with health, happiness and prosperity!

By