



" Why Cows Don't Get an Official Index ? "

Have you ever asked this question? Well, since the implementation of Vision 2000 by milking recording and the Canadian Test Day Model for calculating genetic evaluations at CDN, there are new guidelines for cows to receive official genetic indexes for production traits. Below is a summary of these new criteria to be sure that all cows get their indexes as quickly as possible.

(1) **Animal Identification:** At least 50% of the first lactation cows in the herd on each test day must have a unique NLID identification number which can be used for registration in the breed herdbook. If this criteria is not met for a specific test day, then none of the test day records for the herd will be included for genetic evaluations.

(2) **Verified Pedigree:** Once a cow calves to begin her first lactation, the milk recording agency must have verified pedigree information in the Vision 2000 database before any production data is forwarded to CDN for inclusion in genetic evaluations. Herds on the heifer management option offered by milk recording will have little problem in this area but otherwise the cow would likely have been tested at least twice before CDN receives any test day or lactation information for inclusion in genetic evaluations.

(3) **Meter Verification:** Herds using their own milk meters on test day must be using CMRB-approved meters which are verified on an annual basis. Every herd will be offered a meter verification service by their milk recording agency but it is the producer's responsibility to ensure that the maximum period of 15 months between meter checks is respected. Once 15 months has passed, subsequent test day records for all cows will not be included in genetic evaluations.

(4) **Testing Interval:** The herd must be tested at regular intervals of less than 50 days such that at least 10 milk test visits are performed each year. Individual cows may have an individual test interval up to 75 days but the average interval between tests must be less than 50 days for the current lactation, up to third lactation, in order to receive a genetic index which is "Publishable".

(5) **Supervised Testing:** For a publishable index, the cow must have at least one test in the genetic evaluation system which is past 60 days in milk. She must have at least two supervised tests included in her index calculation and at least one of the two most recent tests must be supervised. Only tests from the first three lactations are used. For herds on regular supervised testing, only the 60 day minimum is important but the other criteria have an impact for herds on alternate testing programs which include some unsupervised tests.

If a cow's test day information exists at CDN and is used for genetic evaluations, the criteria related to meter verification, testing interval and supervised testing above, could result in her production index being "Unpublishable". The Genetic Herd Inventory reports produced by CDN provide each producer with the indexes for all cows which calved in the herd during the past two years and separates them depending on whether their index is "Publishable" or "Not for Publication". The latter are provided for management information and must not be used for promotional or sales purposes.

The process of collecting the production information by milk recording agencies, processing it through Vision 2000, transferring it to CDN and subsequently computing the genetic evaluations is quite complex. There are several steps that the information on each cow must pass before she receives an official, publishable index. If you have any questions why a cow's index is not available or "Not for Publication", please feel free to contact CDN at 519-767-9660 for assistance.