

Tips about Managing

August 2024:

Corporate blindness.

Do you not (yet) suffer from business blindness?

How many daily chores have been running on “autopilot” for a while now, not thinking anymore about whether it could be done more conveniently or whether some ease has crept in here and there?

How often do you still do the 2-Minute Check?

And do you check weekly whether the concentrate, for example given to old-milk cows, in particular is in line with their condition and production? In other words: are your concentrate costs spent on the right cows at the right time? Are the cows that are going to be dried off in the right condition?

In the robot / milking parlor area: How clean and how maintained are the technical components to prevent unwanted surprises at the wrong time?

Do you still look at the Work Routines list every now and then?

July 2024:

Clearly cow identification?

Can “strangers” recognize your cows?

You probably know all your cows and don't need the collar numbers or ear tags to know which cow it is.

But what if you go on holiday or for some other reason, perhaps suddenly, you need someone to take over your work. Can this person find the cows?

In other words: Is your cow identification in order? Are the numbers on the collars complete and legible to a stranger? Aren't collars twisted, etc.?

When using ear tags as cow identification: are they complete and legible?

February 2024:

When and how to collect cows?

You don't want to teach the cows to wait for someone to pick them up. So when do they stay away too long? After how many hours do you pick them up?

It is very important to look at lactation days and expected milk yield.

And based on her experience with the milking robots, does she know the game and will eventually get there on her own, not too late.

Cows with many lactation days may come less often than fresh cows.

At least if the cell count / conductivity is low it is not a big problem.

If the new-milk cows don't come often enough, something is simply wrong.

It is not good if fresh cows stay away for more than 10 hours!

And pay attention again to the new heifers, the animals with the least robot experience, which must be taught intensive robot visits as soon as possible after calving.

They must also visit the VMS within 10 hours

By picking up cows at irregular times, you teach them not to wait for the farmer to pick them up.

And the collection round always start from the robot's exit or where the cows return to the stable after a robot visit.

Then they are much calmer and otherwise you will first scare cows away and have them come back later.

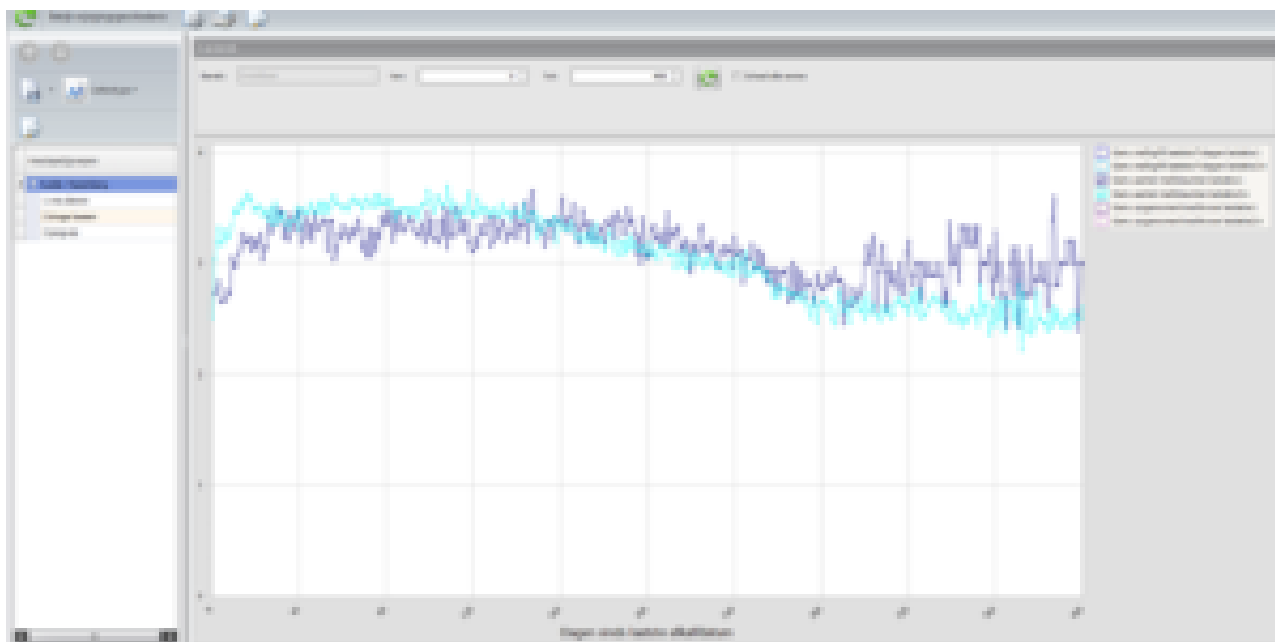
Take the manure scraper in your hand to use along the boxes and as an extended arm and you have done 2 rounds in one go.

December 2023:

How quickly do your heifers get over three milkings?

It is very important, and also significant, that your heifers quickly reach more than 3 milkings per day after calving.

You can see this under “Animal” and then click on the Lactation Overview under Herd Charts. For this overview on the right, only check the two checkboxes for the milkings, see picture.



If all goes well, older cows that are already familiar with the robot will have over three milkings per day within a week.

Heifers still have to learn it and so it can take longer.

The sooner they are above 3 milkings, the better.

That depends, among other things, on this:

- How healthy and vital are they after calving?
- How soon after calving do you bring them to the robot?
- How much time do you put into learning
- What is the occupancy rate at the robot(s)?
- How much space is there around the entrance of the robot, can they access it if older cows are also walking around in the (waiting) area in front of the robot?

July 2023:

How much time does a cow use a VMS in a week?

For efficient VMS utilization it is important to know which cows use a lot and which cows use little time from the milking robot. We have therefore compiled a list where you can see exactly which cow consumes the most time per visit.

But it becomes even clearer if we look at which cow uses the most time over a whole week!

The average cow uses about 2 hours of a robot per week. The differences are quite big.

The cows that use the most time are sometimes over 4 hours and those cows therefore use 2x as much time as your average cow. You would expect that this has to do with many liters and many visits per cow. But at the top are not only cows that give a lot of milk! Cows that milk very slowly or that are difficult to connect, or that are not well adjusted, set, are also (too) high on this list.

These cows significantly reduce the capacity of your milking robot!

Which cows use a lot of time and which is undesirable?

Can anything be done about this? Are these cows worth it?

Or just don't inseminate again...?

The list was originally intended to see cows with rapidly rising MDi even earlier, but the columns about time use are a

nice extra ?

The MDi number, but especially the color differences in this list, you can immediately see which cows have a rapidly rising MDi at the last milking.

Do you want this list? Then send an email to harry@harrytuinier.nl

I will tell you in my reply mail how you can conveniently put this list in DelPro on your computer.

May 2023:

Milking speed per bull.

Livestock improvement organizations not only want to know the production of the daughters of their bulls, but also ask about milking speed, behaviour, etc. .

Now this can easily be found in DelPro, but per cow and not per father.

DelPro has many lists and almost anything can be made for wishes or clear overviews tailored to your company.

We have also made a list to view the milking speed of the offspring per bull. With possibly incomplete milkings, who kicks off most often, etc.

But for those who milk with VMS Classic the Performance Index is also included .

That is a figure that indicates how quickly the cow is connected.

(See previous Performance Index Tip)

A list with information per bull is especially interesting when there are more daughters of the same bull.

And it is of course important that the fathers are entered in DelPro!

Oktober 2021:

Update animal records on a daily basis.

For most dairy farmers it is the most natural thing in the world to immediately put all data, calving, heats, inseminations, drying off, treatments, etc. into the computer. Then you are not only always up to date, the system can also provide much more and correct information via the well-known lists and overviews to properly manage your company and cows. Keeping a good cow calendar provides a lot of information. Also if you decide not to inseminate a cow again and put it on Cull Decision, lists remain clear.

But sometimes it is not done because the farmer has, for example, Management Program and that data may not automatically go to DelPro.

Then it often comes down to both programs being half used. If your program gives also good information it is okay but otherwise it would be a great pity if we miss the clear information that DelPro can offer!

Then get over it and make sure DelPro has all the information. You will enjoy this afterwards! Then just use the info from your Management program to put the data in DelPro.

January 2021:

What is needed for the highest daily production per VMS.

We often hear interesting stories about the average daily production of a milking robot.

Sometimes 1500 liters per day, sometimes more than 2000, some regularly reach 2500 liters and a few are milking even more than 3000 liters per robot per day.

What do you think is necessary and important to achieve a high production per milking robot?

Here I would like to add experiences and practical tips from you, so I hope for responses from you:

If this is successful, I would also like to make a list with more tips from you, for example about increasing the number of visits to the milking robot, keeping the somatic cell count low, ...

Some examples of mine what is needed for high daily productions per VMS:

- High-yielding livestock, high persistence
- High quality roughage.
- Pay extra attention that newly calved heifers learn to visit the VMS soon after calving and are given time / space for this.
- Many cows with 2+ lactations
- Slow-milking cows or cows that take too much time from the robot should no longer be inseminated.

It is therefore the intention that this list is getting longer.

I would like to add your practical tips and experiences to this!

Added by you:

- Punctually claw care policy (for dry period and after negative energy balance period) by the skilled person.
- Short interval between calves
- Reward high-yielding cows (concentrate, space, ...)
- Often push feed, also at night
- Generous, comfortable lying places

November 2020:

Every newly born heifer calf is a potential 100,000 liter COW...

That sounds like someone is saying "dream on".

Because there are a lot of links in the chain along the way that can break too soon.

Can you identify weak links within your company?

Rearing – housing – first year – start of first lactation – perhaps too few cows calving for the third time – condition – claws – nutrition – housing / cow comfort.

Good rearing produces well-developed heifers that can calve at 22-24 months of age.

That is where the basis lies.

We want to take good care of the old cows. But these have also been young.

And to get old cows we have to take good care of the young stock and the younger cows by giving them plenty of space.

Go through the different stages, links, at your farm with a (feed) advisor, veterinarian.

June 2019:

Make note of the details

Most engineers are proud of the DeLaval VMS and how it works. They would be eager to tell what they know and what you can do to improve your workflow. What they don't always know is what you don't know. For example, a farmer could think that milk cups do not connect properly by a few, or more, cows is normal, or sounds that you now find normal but that are not. If the farmer doesn't make note of the details, then the technician would have to coincidentally experience the issue

in order to solve it.

So, make sure to always have your phone or a pen and notebook with you.

Make a list of things for the technician to take a look at and they'll let you know if anything is out of the ordinary. Having the possibility to take notes would also make your work easier.

If you think of something while you're standing behind your barn or in the middle of the field, you could just jot it down and make note of it.

March 2019:

Do you have a good replacement?

Do you have a manual for when you're suddenly unavailable?

Is there someone who knows enough about your farm and your cows?

Is there someone to replace your job around the VMS, the calves or feeding practices?

In the meantime, trainees at agricultural schools and agri-business farmcare services in the Netherlands are learning about the possibilities to replace a farmer with an automatic milking system. It's even possible to complete exams in these courses!

In general, it is smart to be a proponent of these initiatives. More important, it could prove incredibly useful for when you yourselves are suddenly unavailable.

December 2018:

Use the good qualities of your machine.

Currently, there are 6 to 7 milking robot brands on the market. And guess what, they all can milk cows.

Experts however, claim that each robot has its strengths. All brands have their good and less good points.

Do you leverage the strengths of your milking robot ? You paid for it!

Consult your advisor to what extent you can use the strengths.

And if you focus on automatic milking: can you objectively choose which strengths of a brand are best for you and your company?

July 2018:

Work less on the computer and go see more!

Many dairy-farmers sometimes sigh during my visit: "There's a lot of things that are possible.

I should actually be working on the computer more, but I just don't feel like doing that."

My idea: Don't work more but more efficient and structured on the computer!

So: Do the 2-Minute-Check before you go cleaning the boxes, or before making your evening round . This is the easiest way to combine the eyes of the farmer with the information you get from the computer.

Also, check the 'Feed control list' that is tailored personal to your dairy in relation to the amount of sorts of food in the AMS and if you do or don't have an extra feed station for concentrate in the barn.

Check this list , your personalized Feed control list, to manage the proper feeding and right concentrate fed to the

right cow and if consumed.

Fourth important list is the "Milk Performance" list, to check for efficient milkings.

If you have "all time of the world go check all the given Lists.

But if you don't: Check these four very important lists: 1. Status list, 2. Cow monitor (2-Minute-Check), 3. Feed checking list and 4. the Milking Performance List.

But these four you need to check very regularly, disciplinary, and keep a close eye on them.

Status list and Cow monitor you check a couple of times a day. For the last two lists, make a habit to check them at a certain point in the week (Monday morning after your coffee, for example).

Now you have minimum computer work for the maximum information of your cows!

Do you want to keep more control while spending less time on the computer?

Send me a message and let me come by so we can discuss how to do that.

One udder inflammation less (or less bad), using concentrated food more accurately and you know you'll have earned back the visit in no time!

December 2017:

Different Groups on VMS.

If you have the possibility to make groups in your stalls, this could be an interesting feature.

Often, groups are made according to productivity: high versus

low.

To be honest, the effect can be disappointing, especially when the cows have to go from the high productivity group to the low productivity group. Not only does the ration change, but they also, again, have to go up against tough, older, or in late lactation stronger cows.

Or many heifers calve in a short time and they all have to learn robotic milking and get used to the herd.

But we do see better results if you have the opportunity to make a group of heifers together with the smaller, second calving cows. In this case, the animals remain in the same VMS group for a whole year, so no or minimal changes.

Another advantage is that these heifers don't have to go up against bigger cows as often.

It is measured e.g. by "Vetvice" that these cows make about 10% more visits to the troughs and VMS because there are less dominant cows in the way.

That results in higher productivity and a healthier development of the young cows.

For such a group, perhaps you can choose different VMS settings, smaller or other teat liners and milking jug.