Time to prolong milk component peaks

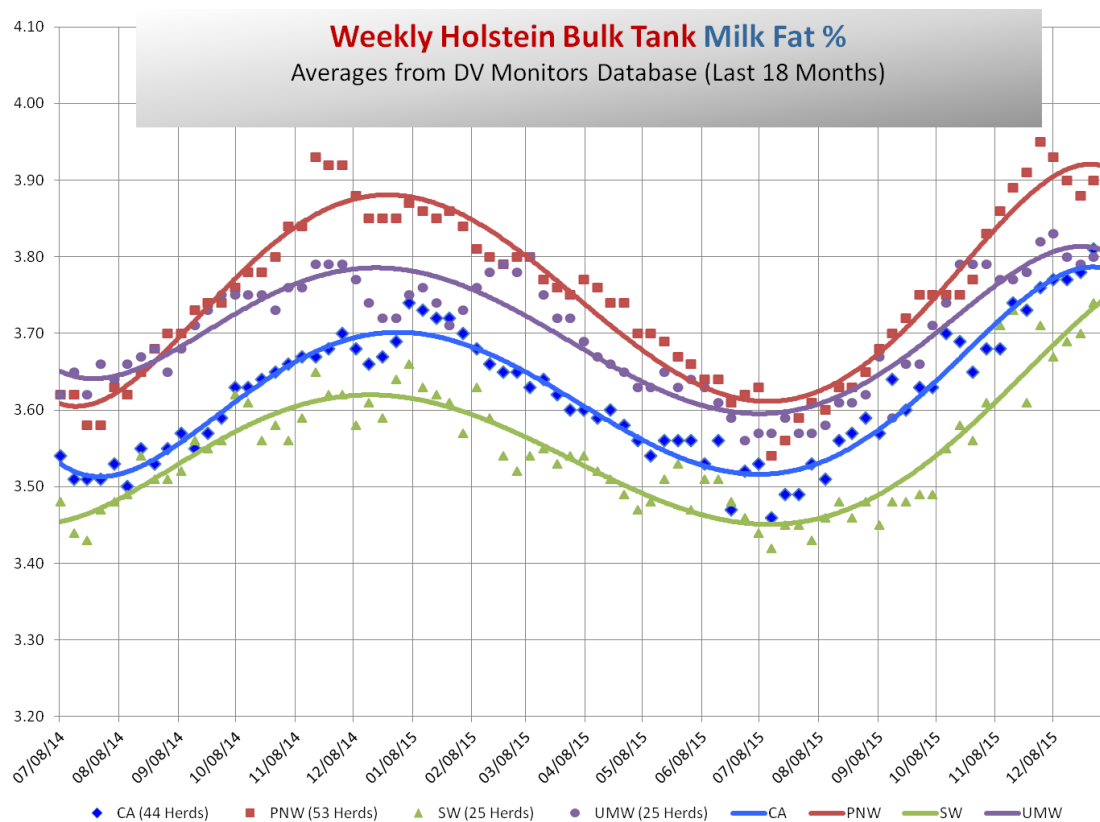**By W.K. (Bill) Sanchez, Ph.D., Dipl. ACAN**
Technical Service Director – Dairy
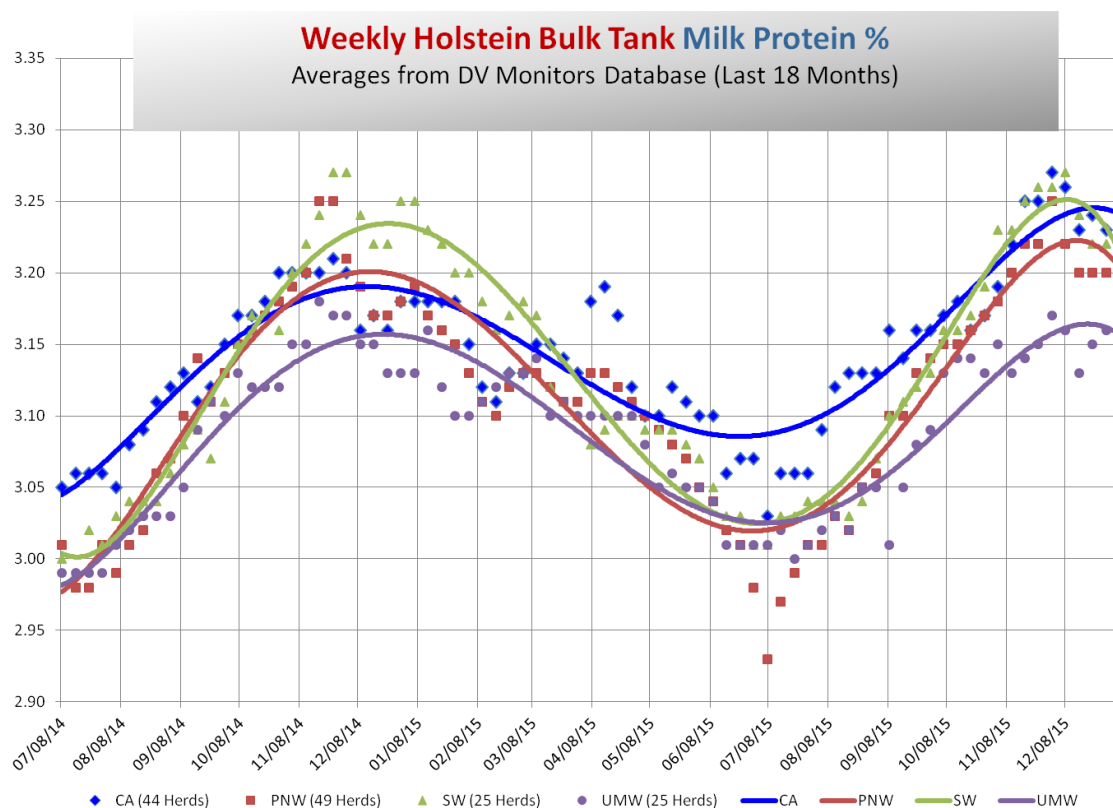**Diamond V**

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This month's DV Monitors shows milk component data for leading Holstein and Jersey herds through the end of December. Now that you are at your seasonal peaks for milk fat and milk protein as shown in the data, this is a great time to pull out the toolbox of nutritional strategies to try to maintain these milk components as best you can.

Butter prices, which are still the bright spot in the dairy industry, remain relatively strong compared to year-ago prices (see "Risk Management" in this issue). Producers continue to do an amazing job of maximizing their milk checks despite the challenge of lower milk prices. DV Monitors information is intended to help with that goal.

Weekly Holstein Bulk Tank Milk Fat %
Averages from DV Monitors Database (Last 18 Months)

DV Monitors provides monthly updates to help you monitor milk components across the West, including the Upper Midwest. This tool provides real-time regional milk component data from about 150 Holstein herds and 17 Jersey herds.
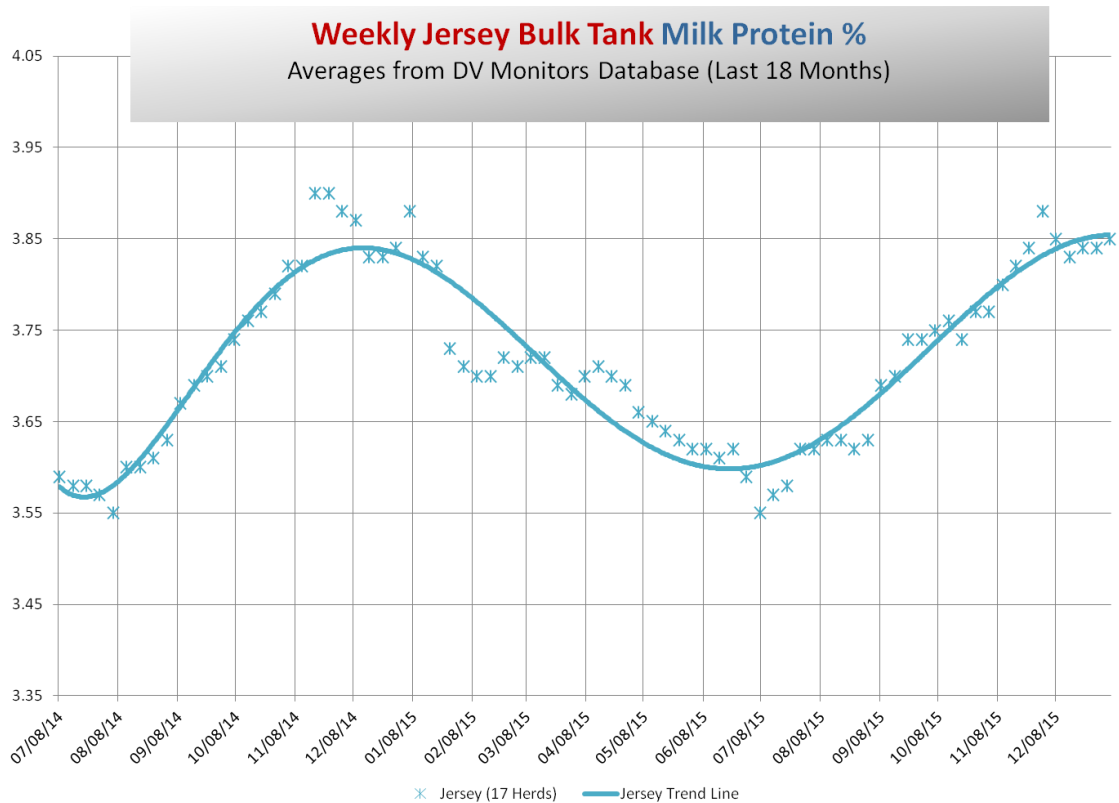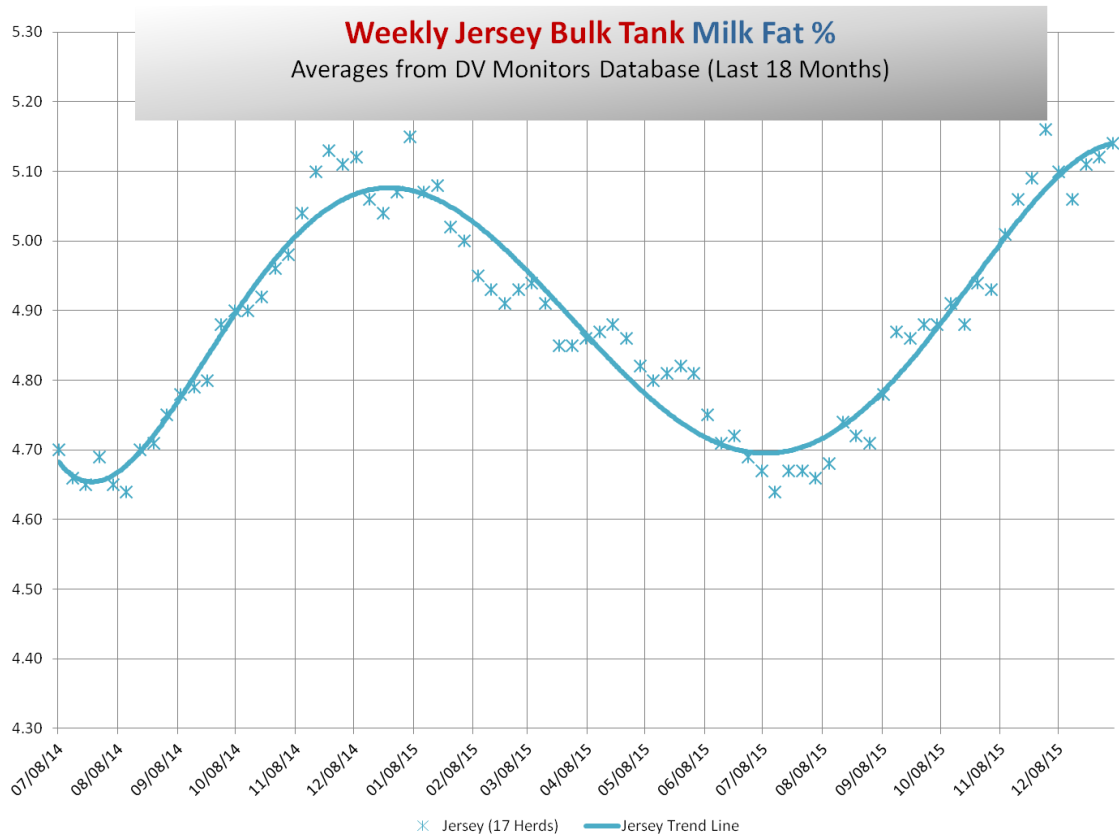
For Holstein herds, all regions are now averaging above 3.75% milk fat. Milk protein percentages for Holstein herds have regional averages running from 3.16% (Upper Midwest) to 3.24% (California).

DV Monitors data come from weekly weighted averages from Holstein and Jersey herds enrolled in our database. We download the information from various milk processor websites for every load of milk and generate weekly averages.

It's hard to compare an individual dairy with milk processor averages in some regions that have large numbers of Holstein and Jersey herds pooled together. So, we summarize the data by breed. We also provide separate charts of the Holstein data from four major dairy regions:
- CA – California (44 herds)
- PNW – Oregon, Washington, Idaho (49 herds)
- SW – Arizona, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas (25 herds)
- UMW – South Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, Ohio (25 herds)

Weekly Jersey Bulk Tank Milk Fat %
Averages from DV Monitors Database (Last 18 Months)

✳ Jersey (17 Herds) ━━ Jersey Trend Line

Weekly Jersey Bulk Tank Milk Protein %
Averages from DV Monitors Database (Last 18 Months)

✳ Jersey (17 Herds) ━━ Jersey Trend Line

Due to the lower number of Jersey herds enrolled in the database, we compute a national rather than regional average. In any case, the database is large enough to provide an index for all Diamond V customers to compare their milk fat and milk protein performance to that of other leading herds.

By providing weekly summaries for comparable high-performing herds, DV Monitors can help rule out some of the "background noise" of normal variation. The data reveal important seasonal trends as well as the transient effects of other factors affecting the herds enrolled in the program.

Using DV Monitors data, you can "self index" your dairy's fat and protein performance against others. If your milk component values are much greater than the regional averages, then it's likely that what you and your nutritionist are doing is working.

We welcome your questions about DV Monitors. Please email questions to the *DairyAdvisor* editor (cgill@diamondv.com) with "DV Monitors" in the subject line. A Diamond V Dairy Advisor will follow up.

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