DV Monitors

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Diamond V data tool tracks milk fat and protein

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It's that time of year when there's a lot of concern about low concentrations of milk fat. Your milk fat percentages may be low, too, but are they abnormal?

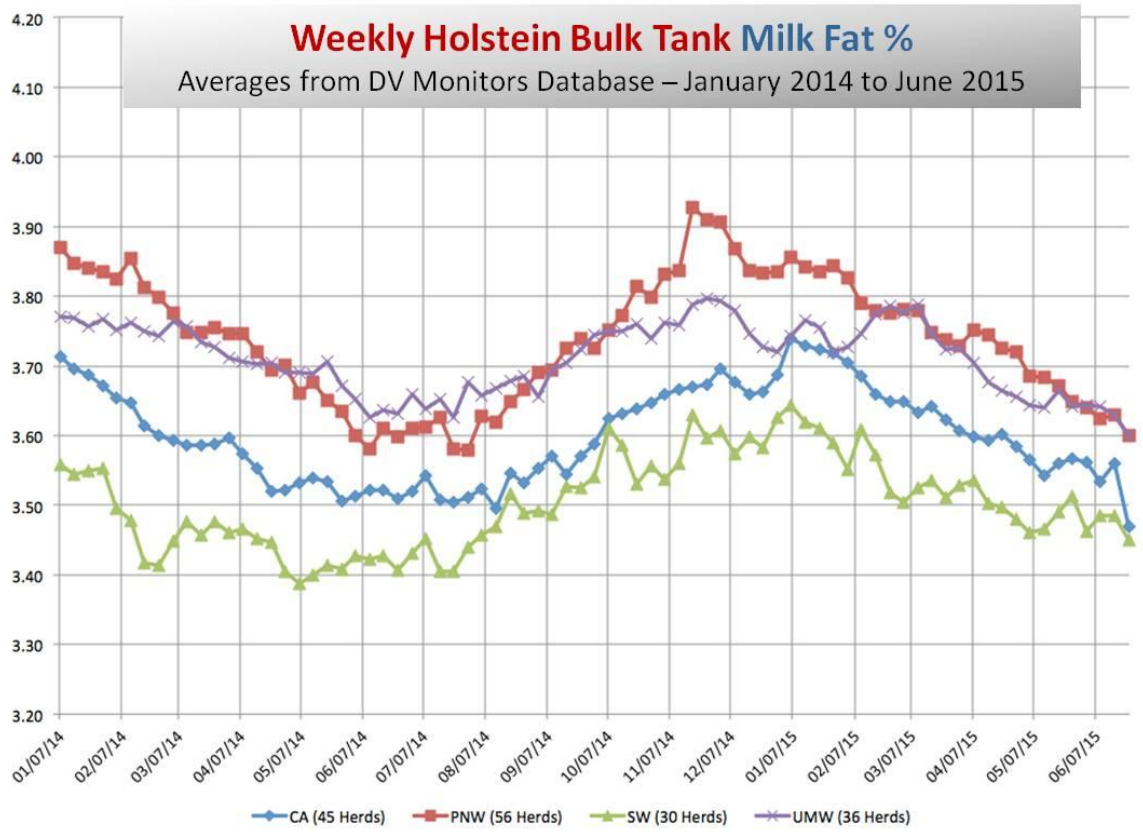
You're already tracking both fat and protein percentages in your milk production. You know shifts up or down can occur depending on changes in season, feedstuffs, management, genetics, and many other factors. But how do you know whether changes in your milk components reflect normal variation or point to a problem?

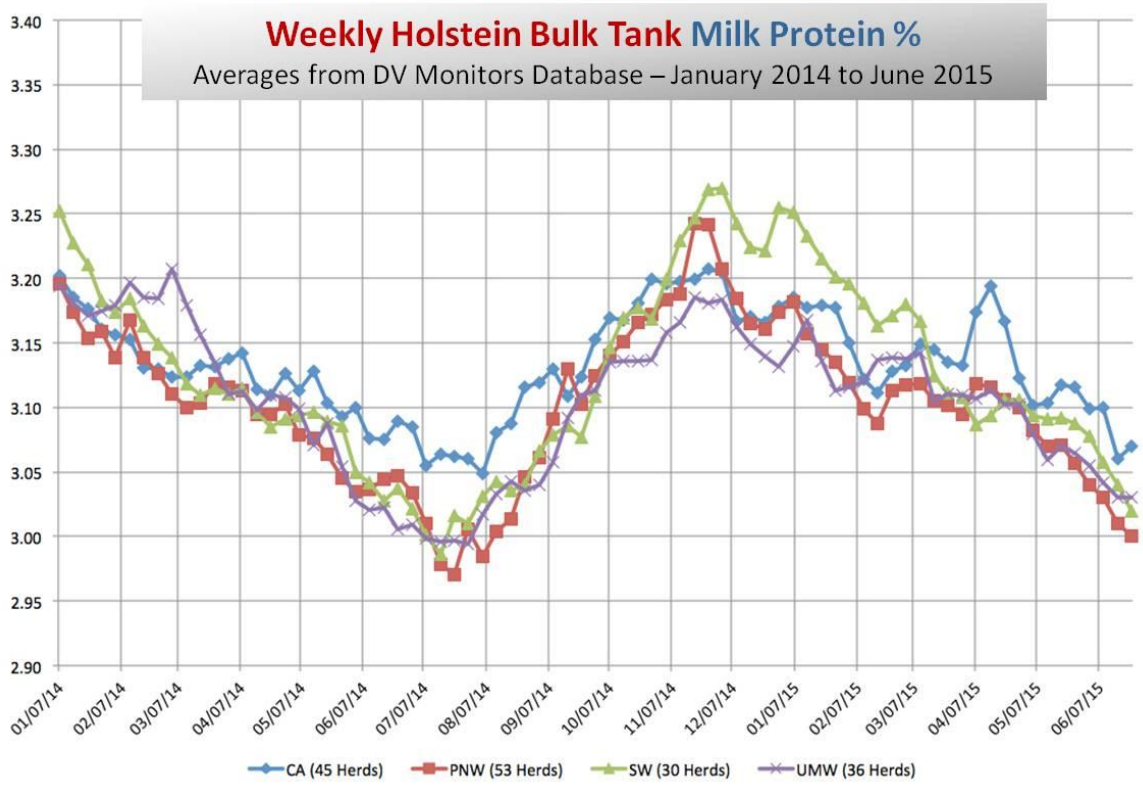
Our new DV Monitors monthly data in *DairyAdvisor* can help you put your milk fat and milk protein in perspective. Diamond V has assembled a database called DV Monitors that consists of bulk tank data from leading Holstein herds. This information provides weekly average fat and protein in milk going back to January, 2014.

We download the information from milk processor websites and generate weekly averages across four major dairy regions:

- CA – California (45 herds)
- PNW – Oregon, Washington, Idaho (56 herds)
- SW – Arizona, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas (30 herds)
- UMW – South Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, Ohio (36 herds)

The database is large enough to provide you an index to compare to other leading herds across both time and region.


Weekly Holstein Bulk Tank Milk Fat %
Averages from DV Monitors Database – January 2014 to June 2015
4.20
4.10
4.00
3.90
3.80
3.70
3.60
3.50
3.40
3.30
3.20
01/07/14
02/07/14
03/07/14
04/07/14
05/07/14
06/07/14
07/07/14
08/07/14
09/07/14
10/07/14
11/07/14
12/07/14
01/07/15
02/07/15
03/07/15
04/07/15
05/07/15
06/07/15
CA (45 Herds)
PNW (56 Herds)
SW (30 Herds)
UMW (36 Herds)


Weekly Holstein Bulk Tank Milk Protein %
Averages from DV Monitors Database – January 2014 to June 2015
3.40
3.35
3.30
3.25
3.20
3.15
3.10
3.05
3.00
2.95
2.90
01/07/14
02/07/14
03/07/14
04/07/14
05/07/14
06/07/14
07/07/14
08/07/14
09/07/14
10/07/14
11/07/14
12/07/14
01/07/15
02/07/15
03/07/15
04/07/15
05/07/15
06/07/15
CA (45 Herds)
PNW (53 Herds)
SW (30 Herds)
UMW (36 Herds)

A unique value of the information is that it is summarized by breed. Using milk processor data as your index, it can be hard to compare an individual dairy with processor averages in regions that have large numbers of Holstein and Jersey herds pooled together. We're starting in *DairyAdvisor* with the Holstein milk component data and plan to include the Jersey averages at a later time.

This first DV Monitors release shows that both milk fat and protein concentrations are currently near their annual lows, most likely reaching bottom within the next month before they start their fall increase.

Based on the consistent, repeatable seasonal patterns that exist for both fat and protein, in coming months *DairyAdvisor* will include projections, informing you of likely future average milk fat and protein values.

A note of caution: It can be difficult to know for sure what may be causing fluctuations in milk components at individual dairies. However, DV Monitors helps rule out the "background noise" of normal variation by summarizing the information on a weekly basis for comparable high-performing herds. The data reveal important seasonal trends. However, don't read too much into subtle changes that are likely caused by all of the numerous factors that are part of the normal variation within dairy herds.

Something to keep in mind: Milk fat is almost always more variable than milk protein. For example, a regional shift in feedstuffs – let's say a shift to greater inclusion of a certain commodity like a high fat byproduct – could have a significant impact on milk fat averages.

DV Monitors data let you "self index" your dairy's fat and protein performance against others. For example, if your protein value is trending flat when the average is heading higher, then it's likely that you have an opportunity to improve.

Here's an article from *DairyAdvisor* to show how DV Monitors data helped identify and resolve a western dairy farm's low milk fat scenario.

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

Diamond V
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