DV Monitors

Milk components rebounding across all western regions

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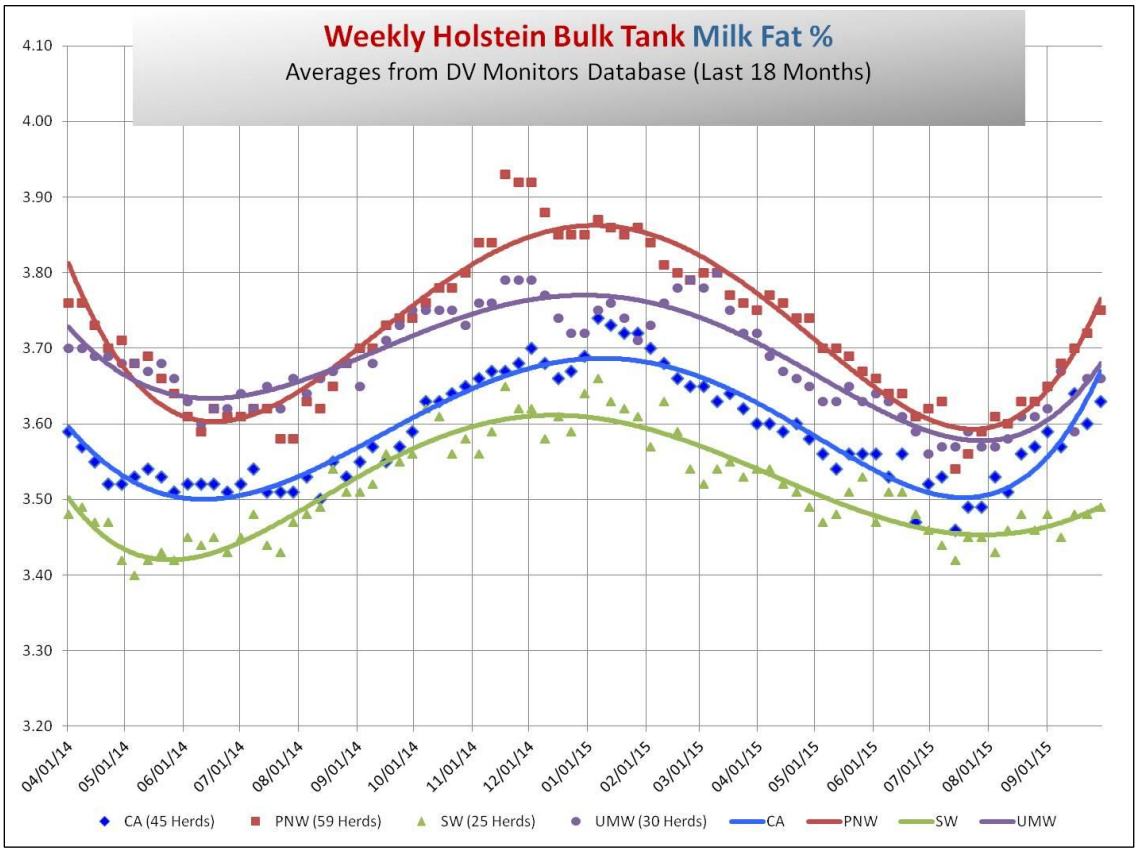
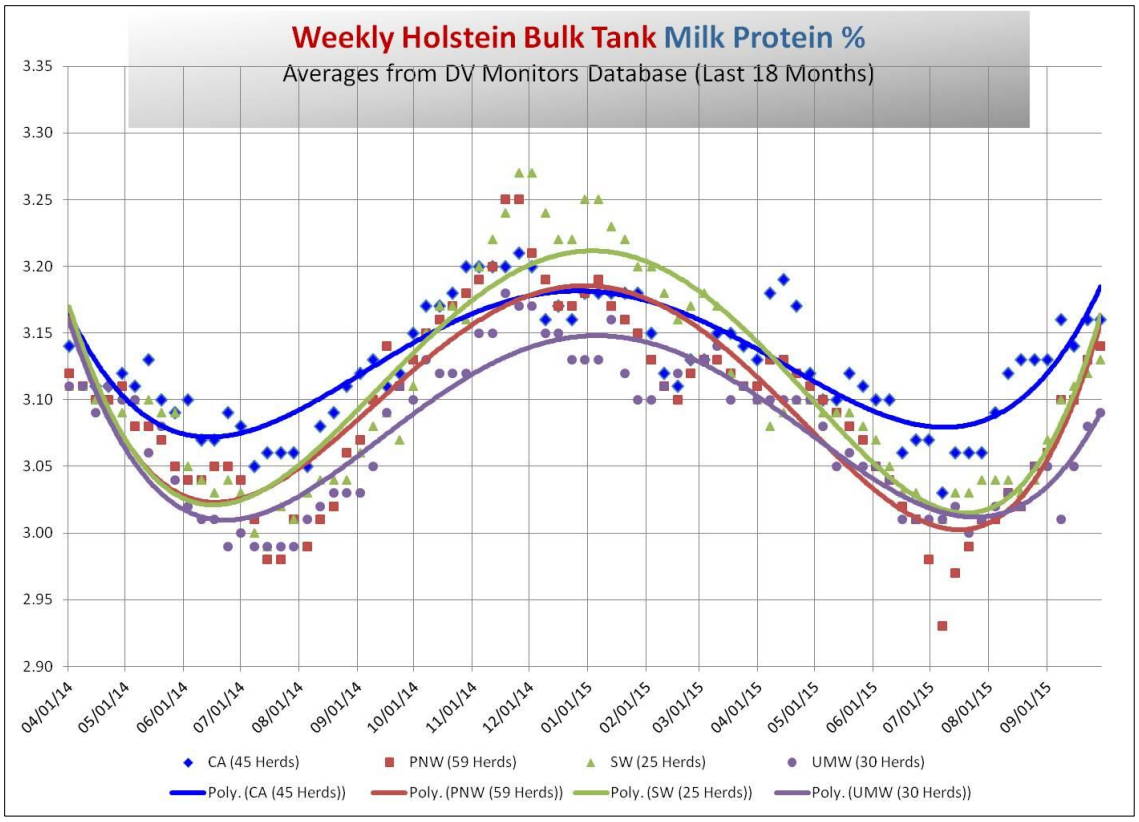
As published in DairyAdvisor™

From DV Monitors data through the end of September, we are seeing a fairly rapid rebound in milk fat percentage from the summer seasonal lows in nearly all regions across the country. However, it appears that the southwest region (SW) is lagging a bit.

The SW milk fat lag may be due to challenges from lingering hot weather, or it may be due to the reduced numbers of herds that make up that region. In any case, milk protein is increasing consistently in all regions covered by our reporting. Our 18-month "moving window" this month covers April 2014 through September 2015, providing a balanced view of seasonal shifts and significant regional differences in milk components.





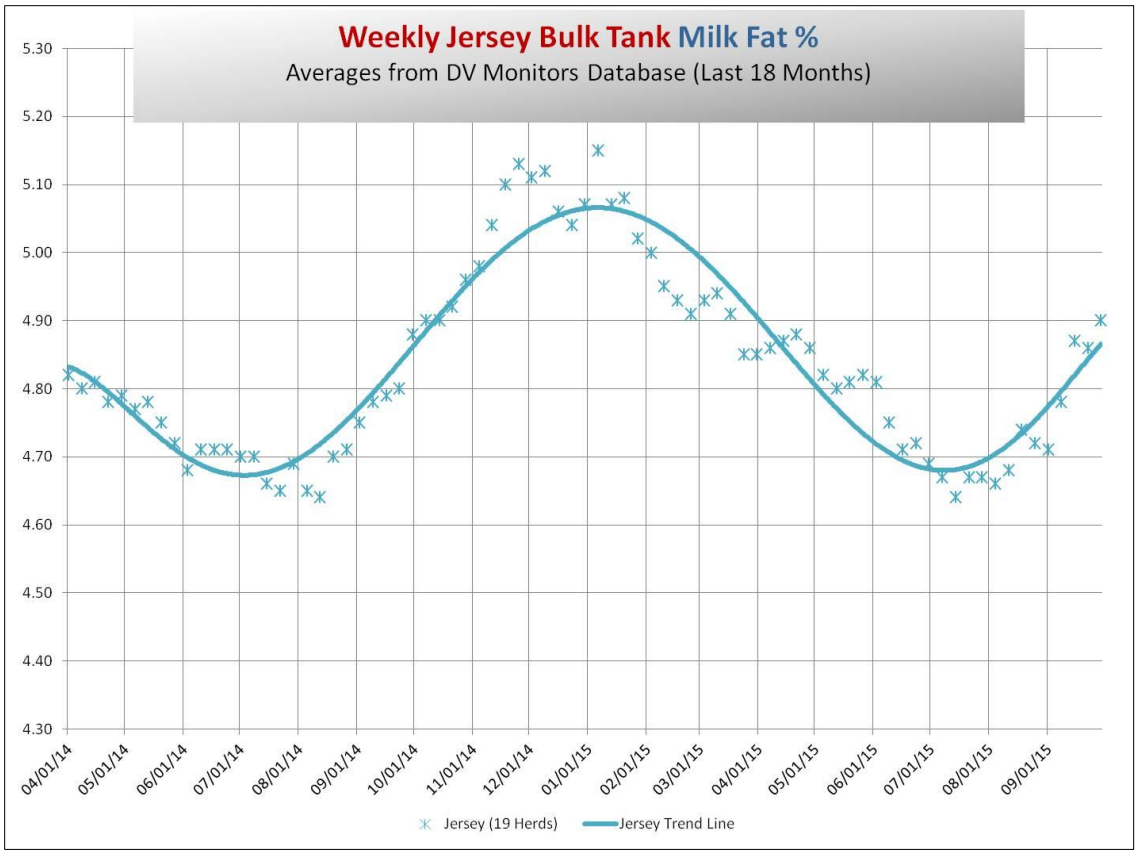
The data come from weekly weighted averages from 159 Holstein herds enrolled in our DV Monitors database. We download the real-time information from various milk processor websites for every load of milk and generate weekly averages across four major dairy regions:

- CA – California (45 herds)
- PNW – Oregon, Washington, Idaho (59 herds)
- SW – Arizona, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas (25 herds)
- UMW – South Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, Ohio (30 herds)

The database is large enough to provide an index for all Diamond V customers to compare to other leading herds across both time and region.

We summarize the data by breed. That's because 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.

This month, in addition to the Holstein herd data, we are including Jersey averages as well. However, we are only able to compute a national average for the Jerseys -- rather than regional averages -- due to the lower number of Jersey herds enrolled in the data base.


Weekly Jersey Bulk Tank Milk Fat %
Averages from DV Monitors Database (Last 18 Months)
5.30
5.20
5.10
5.00
4.90
4.80
4.70
4.60
4.50
4.40
4.30
04/01/14
05/01/14
06/01/14
07/01/14
08/01/14
09/01/14
10/01/14
11/01/14
12/01/14
01/01/15
02/01/15
03/01/15
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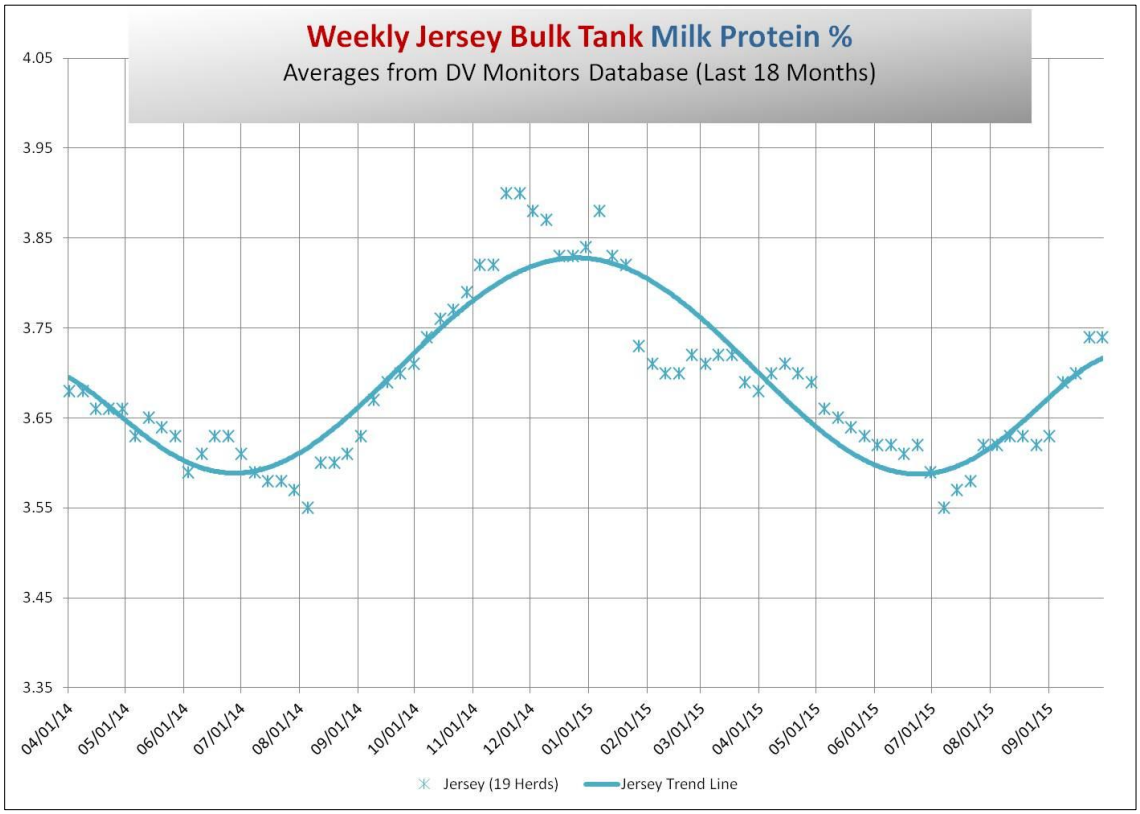
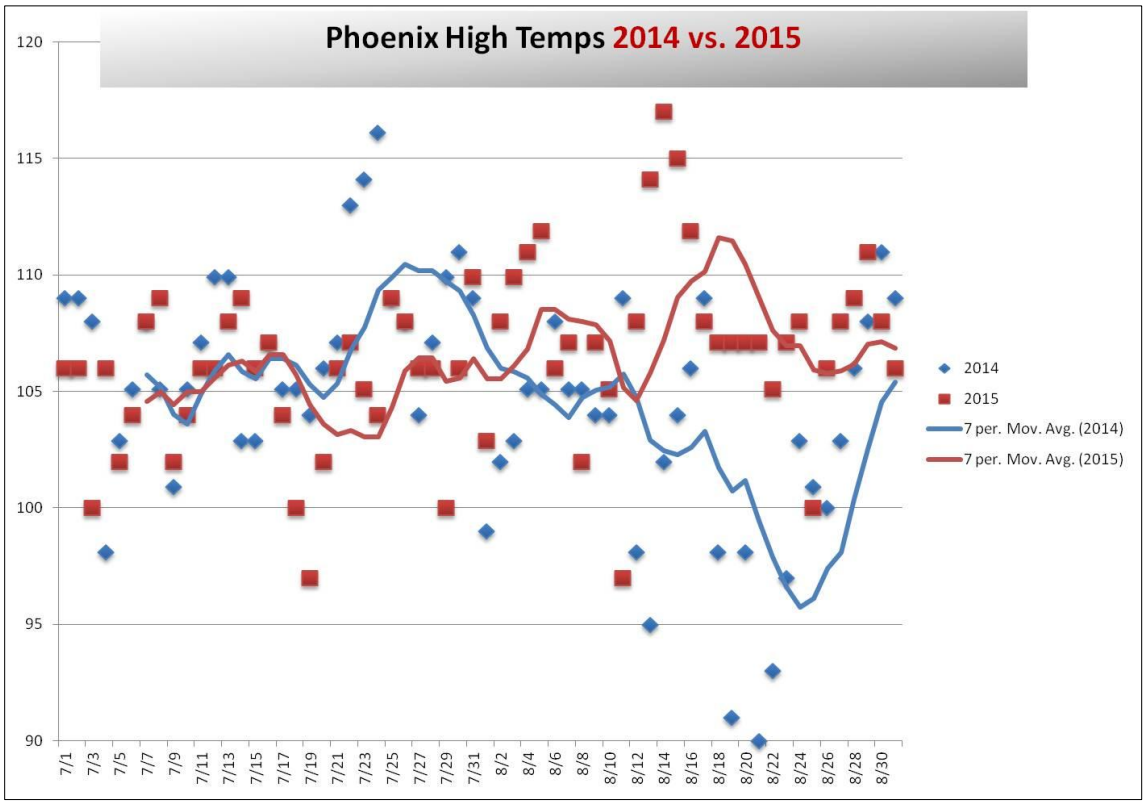
08/01/15
09/01/15
Jersey (19 Herds)
Jersey Trend Line


Weekly Jersey Bulk Tank Milk Protein %
Averages from DV Monitors Database (Last 18 Months)
4.05
3.95
3.85
3.75
3.65
3.55
3.45
3.35
04/01/14
05/01/14
06/01/14
07/01/14
08/01/14
09/01/14
10/01/14
11/01/14
12/01/14
01/01/15
02/01/15
03/01/15
04/01/15
05/01/15
06/01/15
07/01/15
08/01/15
09/01/15
Jersey (19 Herds)
Jersey Trend Line

For the Jerseys, as with the Holsteins, this month's DV Monitors update shows that both milk fat and milk protein concentrations continue to rebound from their summer lows.

Please keep in mind that it can be difficult to know for sure what may be causing fluctuations in milk components at individual dairies. Nonetheless, DV Monitors helps rule out the "background noise" of normal variation by providing weekly summaries for comparable high-performing herds. The data reveal important seasonal trends as well as the transient effects of other factors affecting the herds enrolled in the program.

Looking at the Holstein data, one question we have is why the SW region appears to be lagging on their milk fat seasonal rebound. One possibility is the effect of heat with the high temperatures that occurred in the late summer of 2015 as compared to 2014 (see Phoenix high temps graph).



Another possibility is that the number of herds that make up the regional average has declined, which could mean the overall results could be heavily weighted by a single herd or two affecting the regional average.

In any case, with DV Monitors data, you can "self index" your dairy's fat and protein performance against others. For example, if your protein value is much greater than the regional average, then it's likely that what you and your nutritionist are doing is working – keep at it if you are getting a higher milk blend price than it is costing you.

Thanks for your input on our monthly DV Monitors information. Hopefully, you find it useful to see the averages across regions. Please email any questions to the editor (cgill@diamondv.com) with "DV Monitors" in the subject line. A Diamond V Dairy Advisor will follow up.