

Paramount Dairy halves fresh cow protocol time and improves treatment decision making with SCR ruminant monitoring



“SCR gives us peace of mind. There aren’t a lot of people that can identify a cow when she’s just a little sick. Ruminant monitoring picks those cows out a few days before you would see it.”

Brent Moyer, Manager, Paramount Dairy

At a Glance

Farm: Paramount Enterprises Dairy LLC

Location: Caro, MI

Herd size: 1,250 milking cows and 900 heifers

Challenges:

- Improve herd genetics through use of higher-quality bulls than AI technician supported
- Improve health management to help support milk production goals
- Improve nutrition management

System:

- SCR Heatime® Pro System with HR tags providing health monitoring, heat detection and cow identification functionality

Benefits:

- Fresh cow protocol time is down by 50%
- Number of DAs has been reduced by approximately 60%
- Significantly earlier detection of sick cows enables speedier and more effective treatment
- Accurate monitoring of cows’ response to treatment facilitates ongoing treatment and enables more informed culling decisions, for higher salvage value
- Heat detection rate rose by 25% in the first two months after installing the system
- Earlier detection of non-estrous or cystic cows enables earlier initiation of ov-synch

Background

Located on “the thumb of Michigan” in Tuscola County, Paramount Dairy was founded in 2004 by Brent Robinson. Beginning with just 30 cows, Paramount quickly grew in size to reach its current herd of 1,250 milking cows and 900 heifers. A dairy and grain farm, Paramount grows about 1,200 acres of corn and alfalfa which it uses to feed its large herd.

Challenges

Brent Robinson, Paramount’s owner, is a Cargill nutritionist and so was initially interested in monitoring rumination as a way to gain intelligence on his herd’s nutrition. Pretty quickly, he and his farm manager, Brent Moyer, realized there were other challenges that could also be addressed. Aiming for a 30,000 lb rolling average for the herd, Moyer was looking for ways to improve health management and to enhance the breeding program. As a first step, he wanted to start breeding Paramount’s cows with higher genetic value bulls - a step that his AI technician was not ready to take.

System

After the dairy's management met with representatives from Semex and SCR, Paramount chose the SCR Heatime® Pro System with SCR Heatime HR tags, primarily for the rumination monitoring. At first, 650 tags were used to monitor pre-fresh cows, fresh cows and breeding cows. An additional 400 tags were added a few months later.

SCR's heat detection and rumination monitoring are used daily at Paramount Dairy. "Rumination monitoring is the most used part of the system – the heat detection is just an added benefit," Moyer says. "A healthy cow is going to make more milk and get pregnant and start all over again. Rumination monitoring helps you focus on the critical period when you might have a lot of problems, and helps you prevent them."

Indeed, the reasons that Paramount added 400 tags to its initial purchase was to reduce the number of lost pregnancies on unverified animals by identifying problems sooner and to enable health monitoring of more cows.

Benefits

In the initial period after installation, Paramount's AI technician refused to breed according to the guidance provided by the SCR system. Whenever the system flagged cows that the AI technician had not identified as being ready for AI, Moyer bred those cows himself. The results of his own breeding efforts on cows that were missed by the technician, quickly built Moyer's trust in the SCR system – and enabled him to confidently let the AI technician go. Moyer explains: "We trained inside people and saved the cost of the hired technician. The SCR system will help us make the management and breeding decisions to support our goals for raising milk production across the herd."

With the SCR system, Paramount is saving significant time in both health management and heat detection.

The fresh cow protocol is now faster and more effective. "We were going through a fresh cow protocol every day but now we do it every other day so this has cut the time in half," says Moyer. "Once we treat, we check the graphs the next morning to see if she's coming up or going down. If rumination is going up, then we know the treatment is working – **we don't have to guess.**"

Moyer has noticed a correlation between the rumination activity of the pre-fresh cows and their post-fresh recovery. "If we see a dry cow who fluctuates a lot in her rumination, then about 75% of the time, after she calves she going to have metabolic problems. **So, this enables us to predict which cows are going to have problems, so we can get onto them in the first two to three days after calving and prevent headaches.**"

In addition, the system has helped streamline breeding and improve heat detection accuracy. "We check the system in the morning first thing and we breed the cows it says are ready. Our heat detection rate rose by 25% within a couple of months after we started working with the SCR system stayed the same – so we're breeding more cows," added Moyer.

Moyer sums up: "I am a firm believer in rumination monitoring. **It would be hard to go back to milking cows without it.**"



ABOUT SCR

Building on over 35 years of meaningful innovation, SCR is the leading pioneer of Cow and Milking Intelligence. Monitoring millions of cows worldwide, our data-driven solutions are trusted by successful dairy farmers to deliver the insights and analytics needed to optimize the productivity of every cow. Improving efficiency and driving growth, we help to ensure a secure and prosperous future for their farms and families. SCR. Make every cow count.



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