

DAIRYCHAMP 3.0 FROM AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION MANAGEMENT INC.

User Guide



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We are here to help you for more than just those emergencies when your computer does not work. Use us as a resource for making better, more efficient use of your software, such as designed Custom Reports, interpreting analysis reports, and speeding up data entry.

Please note that in order to gain access to technical support you must have either a current annual support contract; or have your credit card number ready to pay for support on a per-call basis.

Monday through Friday 8:00am to 4:30pm Central Time.

DairyCHAMP is wholly owned by Agricultural Information Management Inc. based in Nampa, Idaho. *Please do not call Agricultural Information Management Inc. for Technical Support.*

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Welcome to DairyCHAMP 3.0

from Agricultural Information Management Inc.

DairyCHAMP is the comprehensive software program designed for record keeping, herd management, and herd health monitoring for dairy farms. CHAMP is an acronym for **C**omputerized **H**ealth **A**nd **M**anagement **P**rogram.

DairyCHAMP 3.0 is our newest version and provides many new features while retaining the best features of its predecessors.

DairyCHAMP can trace its roots back to reproductive work carried out in Australia and New Zealand in the 1970's. The program further developed during the 1980's at the University of Minnesota in the College of Veterinary Medicine in St. Paul, Minnesota. In 1989, it was first released in PC format, and it has subsequently spread to over thirty countries around the world.

In 1995, the project moved out of the College of Veterinary Medicine and into the Center for Farm Financial Management at the University of Minnesota, where the current version was designed, written, developed and launched. In 2000, the rights to the program were transferred to the Agricultural Information Management company under Dr. Mark Kinsel, who has continued to develop and promote the program.

Traditionally, farmers and veterinarians have focused their energies on the diagnosis and treatment of clinical conditions that adversely affect herd productivity. This program will allow you to detect inadequate management and sub-clinical conditions before they have a major impact on production and your bottom line.

DairyCHAMP is far more than a generator of lists of things to do today. Because the program keeps complete lifetime histories of all animals up-and-running at all times, your historical analysis is accordingly complete. The advantages of this are considerable. With DairyCHAMP you can run a multi-year retrospective analysis looking for the incidence of a particular disease, and those disease records will still be there.

In DairyCHAMP, you can access previous completed lactations and removed animals, and edit, delete and add events. Generating lists of things to do is a very reactive style of dairy management. By keeping complete histories fully available, you can detect trends in performance over a period of time and be more pro-active in your management. You can see the development of a problem, even when it is still in the sub-clinical stage, and act accordingly.

Installing Your Program

Before we can do anything, we must first install the DairyCHAMP program onto your computer.

The program is made up of four program disks and one install disk. The install disk is very important to keep safe, since it will be your identifier and will prevent other people from stealing your software. Keep it in a safe place because future updates you may receive will not include an install disk.

To install your program, put your install disk (the one with your serial number on it) into the diskette drive and then go to a DOS-prompt.

In Windows 95/98, go to Start / Programs / MS-DOS prompt.

In Windows 2000 or ME, go to Start / Programs / Accessories / MS-DOS prompt.

DO NOT attempt to install this update using the Windows File / Run feature.

At the prompt, type: **A:** and then press the Enter key.

At the A: prompt, type: **INSTALL** and then press the Enter key.

During installation, you will be prompted for some identifying information and your serial number. The serial number needs to be entered precisely as it is written on the install disk (There are no letter O's in the number, they are all zeros). This information is "stamped" onto the install disk and cannot be altered – and therefore cannot be used by anyone else.

You will then be prompted for each of the four diskettes enclosed in this package. If any one of the four disks fails, please contact technical support for replacement disks. The purchase price of your program includes twelve months of support, and this would seem like an appropriate moment to start using it!

If you receive a message that installation has been terminated, try this command:

At the A:\> prompt: **INSTALL /BIGDRIVE** and then press the Enter key. If you have any questions about this installation, please call us at **651-335-5585**. If you have purchased a technical support contract with your program call us any time between 8:00am and 4:30pm Central Time Monday through Friday.

Installing the Copy Protection Device

Overseas users will also have to install the copy protection device. This is done simply by inserting the device into the printer port on the back of the computer, then re-attaching the printer cable to the device. The necessary connection is made when the printer cable is attached and the printer is turned on; or the cable is detached from the device completely. *Your program will not run if the cable is attached, but the printer is turned off.*

How to Use This Guide

This Guide is designed as a Start-Up Handbook, a brief tour through the program to familiarize you with the major functions. It is not intended to be a full program manual. Within the DairyCHAMP program there are over 500 pages of on-screen Help, accessed by pressing the <F1> key anywhere in the program. With the Help Message displayed on your screen, you can print it out and save it for future reference.

There are some conventions that will help you find your way about this Guide. Whenever you are told to press a particular key, the name of that key is made clear by marking it with brackets, like this: <F1>.



Useful tips that help you better understand particular points are highlighted by these posting notes.

File Functions

In order to run your program, you must start a new farm, or a new set of empty data files into which you will slot your information. The size of the files expand as you add new data, so there is no need to decide beforehand on how big these files need to be.

Since you need to go to File before progressing, now would be a good time to review some of the major File Functions. Think of this as your “housekeeping” area.

Starting a New Farm



Many of you will be fortunate enough to start your dairy records in DairyCHAMP using a herd history file provided by a DHI organization or other dairy software, but sooner or later, you will need to start an animal record from scratch. So whether you have no records at all in your new system, or you have already built up a substantial data set, the following rules apply equally to you all.



The first step is to create an empty data set into which you will enter your records. To do this, go to File and select New File.

You will be prompted for information about this file, or farm. The minimum required is a

farm name, and you can always come back at a later date and fill in the detail. If you are anticipating importing DHI information into this data set, we recommend that you also add the 8-digit DHI herd code.

You may create as many files, or farms, as you wish, depending on the amount of hard drive space you have available.

F-Keys: Functions

F1 Help	Enter Select File	F3 File Detail	F5 Change Drive/Directory
F6 Copy	F7 Rename	F8 Delete	F9 Backup/Restore Esc Menu

F3: File Detail

As mentioned in the section on starting a new farm, all the detail for this particular file is kept under the F3 key on this screen. You can access this at any time and change or add to the information.

F5: Change Drive/Directory

The default location for your data is C:\DC3\DATA, but you can choose to look anywhere on any drive for your data. Please note that the F5 changes the directory only for this session. In order to change the default directory (the one the program goes to each time you start the program), go to Program Set Up / Data Location.

F6: Copy File

While this function is rarely used, you should be aware of the ability to copy an entire data set to a new data set. If you wish to make a copy for backup purposes, use the F9 Backup/Restore instead.

F8: Delete

Be very, very careful when using this key. It does not delete individual events or animals – *this will delete the entire data set!!!*

F9: Backup/Restore

Use frequently! Our recommendation is that you backup after every data entry session, but once a week or so is probably adequate. The question you should ask is: “How much data can I afford to lose?” If you think you could comfortably re-enter a week of data, backup once a week.

If your data set becomes larger than a single diskette, we strongly recommend that you backup to a zip drive (the 100mb or 250mb storage disks) because the chances of a two-disk backup being unreadable are about double that of a single-disk backup. Certainly, if you find that your backup is using more than a couple of 3.5" diskettes, purchase a zip drive. They are inexpensive and the external ones are easy to install.

The backup procedure will backup your data (Animal Events, Milk Events and Farm Events), along with all your Custom Reports, vocabulary, and report settings. When you restore your data, you will be asked if you want to restore just the data or the data and all the settings. If you are running a single farm, it would be safest to restore all, but with multiple farms (such as a consultant's program), you should consider restoring just the data.

MAKE FREQUENT BACKUPS!!

The importance of making regular backups of your data cannot be over-emphasized. It is very important that you make regular, consistent backups of your data using a rotating series of disks. We can replace a program quickly and conveniently, but your data is expensive and irreplaceable.

The Backup Procedure to Use:

Purchase a box of diskettes (3.5 inch, high density, pre-formatted diskettes; or preferably the larger zip-disks of 100mb, 250mb or more) and dedicate that box completely to the making of backups. Arrange your disks into at least three sets (the rotating system mentioned above).

- A rotating system means that you make a backup onto Set One first and set it aside. Label it clearly at Set One, maybe with a blue label.
- The next time you make a backup, you copy onto Set Two, leaving Set One alone. That way, if Set Two should become damaged either during backup or at a later date, then you at least have a relatively recent though slightly older backup set to fall back on. Label it clearly as Set Two, maybe with a green label.
- Next time around make your backup onto Set Three. Now you have the current backup (Three) and two older sets. Label it clearly as Set Three, maybe with a red label.
- The fourth time around, revert to Set One and start the cycle again.

Store them in a safe place, preferably away from the building where you keep your computer.

Occasionally, maybe every three or four months, replace one of the sets with a new set, and recycle or throw away the old set. Do not re-use these diskettes to save a couple of dollars on a million-dollar business!

Occasionally, make an additional set to take to another location for safekeeping.

Why Go to All This Trouble?

This may seem to be somewhat elaborate, but your data can be damaged at any time by power surges, spikes, the hard drive crashing, or simply a small child's lunch. You have invested some money in the DairyCHAMP software, but you have invested many, many more times that amount in collecting and entering data into the system. Your time represents a considerable investment, so protect that investment.

Technical Support can help you with a myriad of questions and problems, but we can never replace your data.

MAKE FREQUENT BACKUPS!!

Data Entry

Before you do any manual data entry, you must read the section on “Starting a New Animal”. Investing a few minutes now will save hours of work in the future.

Navigating in the Data Entry Screen

Finding your way about the Data Entry screen may at first be confusing, but once mastered you will have the ability to quickly add, edit, delete and review events for the current and past lactations for your animals.

There are two keystrokes that are your friends. The <F2> will give you a pull-down list of available options for whatever field you are in (where your cursor is blinking); and the <ctrl-enter> combination will add information into whatever record you have on the screen. Everything else will become second nature to you once you start working in Data Entry.

There is a lot of information on the Data Entry Screen, so let's break it down.

Status Bar

ID: 007-Dottie	Animal Events	Farm: JONES
Type: Cow	Status: Lactating, Pregnant	Lact 5 of 5
DIM: 245	Location: Pasture	

Across the top of the screen, you can see at a glance that we are looking at 007-Dottie; that we are currently in Animal Events; and that we are in the Jones Farm. The next section covers what type of animal we are looking at (DairyCHAMP allows only Cows, Heifers, and Bulls); that she is 245 Days in Milk and she is both lactating and pregnant. She is currently in the Pasture location; and we are looking at the fifth of her five lactations.

You cannot change anything in this section, other than by adding events that influence them, such as adding a Dry Off event to change her status from Lactating to Dry.

Current Events

The middle section displays the current events for this animal. You can scroll up

```
29 Aug 00 Calved; No problems; Not Observed; 1; Female; Raised; 0.00;
21 Sep 00 Comment: Not checked at Vet Visit;
25 Oct 00 AI; 1h3850 Bravo; No; Terry Carlson; Standing; ; 0.00; 0.0...
 7 Dec 00 Pregnancy diagnosis; Pregnant; 0; Rectal; ;
15 Feb 01 Mastitis; ; Intramammary; Cefa-Lak / Today Intramammary Infusion;
- new event -
```

through these events using your <PgUp> and <PgDn> keys. A black bar will highlight the event and bring it down to the bottom section ready for editing or deleting.


The fields that are separated by semi-colons directly reflect the order in which they would appear when adding the event.

Data Entry

The third section of the screen (sometimes referred to as the “bottom half”) is where you will actually do the manual data entry.

```
ID          007-Dottie
Date        05/01/01
Event       Condition
Condition score 3.0
Weight      1150.0
Height      [REDACTED]
Girth       -
```

In the example shown, we are entering a Condition Score event, but it may be any one of thirty or so events applicable to a Cow. Different lists are available for different animal types.

 **You can access your list of available events by putting your cursor on the Event line and pressing <F2>**, just like on the ID field and many other fields in Data Entry. The <F2> key is your friend – it gives you a list of your possible options.

When you select a different event name, detail fields below the event name will change to prompt you for applicable information. Some fields are open fields (you can type in whatever you want); some fields are pulled from vocabulary lists (which you may add to or delete from in Program Set Up); and other fields are fixed (such as Event Names and Animal Types).

Filter

In the bottom right of your screen is a small line that states what the current filter is.

FILTER: Current animals This is quite important. The vast majority of the time your current filter (which animals are displayed in the ID list) will be Current Animals, meaning all current cows, heifers and bulls. If you exit the program and come back in, this filter will re-set to Current Animals.

But sometimes you just want to look at dry cows, or maybe all removed animals, and the filter allows you to do this. It is especially useful when used in conjunction with the F7 Select Many feature (more on that in the Help Messages).

The realization that animals are merely filtered from lists and never deleted or archived, will help you understand how current and removed animals all contribute to historical reporting.

Function Key Options

```
F1 Help F2 Pick List F3 Bio Data F4 Filter Animals PgUp/Dn Prev/Next Event  
F5 Goto Lact F7 Select Many F8 Del Event <Ctrl> Enter Add Event Esc Menu
```

Always along the bottom of your screen is a display of the available hot keys, or function keys, corresponding to the F-keys across the top of your keyboard. It is not the function of this Guide to explain what all the function keys do, rather to bring them to your attention so you may investigate further in the Help Messages.

The same applies to the Animal Events. Having shown you the way into the room, it is now up to you to open all the cupboards and find what we have in store!

Starting a New Animal

In order to start a new animal, you must now go to Data Entry / Animal Events.



The key to starting an animal record is to set her up as she was before the first event you ever want to add.

In Data Entry, simply type in the ID you wish to add. You may use any combination of letters and numbers. The use of leading zeroes is required if you wish to maintain strict numerical order in ID lists. If the ID is not found in the current list, you will be prompted to either search the list to find the ID, or press the <Insert> key to add it. When you press the <Insert> key, you will be prompted for the important information.

If you are starting your DairyCHAMP records from paper or card records, please make sure that you have all the necessary information on hand at the time of setting up the animal. It is much easier to do this right first time than have to go back to make corrections sometime in the future. Often, with all the work there is to do, you will not have the opportunity to back-fill records.



When you are prompted for the date when adding a New Animal Event, that date must be on or before the first date you ever want to use with this animal.

If you wish to start a record in the current lactation, it is strongly recommended that you go back to the last Calved event, even if you purchased the cow as a lactating animal.

When setting up a new animal, the lactation number used should be this animal's lactation number as it was before the first event you ever want to add. For example, if you have a cow currently in her fifth lactation, and you want to add her last two freshening events, this number should be set at 3, because the two freshening events you are going to add will each increase the lactation number by one.

Four Examples for setting up a new animal record:

- 1) Currently a sixth lactation cow and you only want to add the most recent freshening: Add her as a fifth lactation dry pregnant cow, and then add the Calved event.
- 2) Currently a sixth lactation cow and you want to add ALL her Calved events: Add her as a zero lactation heifer, and then add all the Calved events in exact chronological order.
- 3) Currently a first lactation cow and you want to add her only Calved event: Add her as a zero lactation heifer, and then add her Calved event. She will automatically increment to first lactation, cow, lactating, open.
- 4) Currently a zero lactation Heifer: Add her as a heifer, but remember to enter the Birthdate in her Biographical Information. Birthdates are not as important with cows (which are measured in Days In Milk) as they are in heifers (which are measured in Age In Days or Age In Months).

There is a minimum amount of information that is required to start a new record, but of course, the more information you have at hand, the better your data set will be.



Due to the critical nature of the Calved event, you will be unable to go back at a later date and edit the Calved event, to add information you may have skipped when adding the New Animal.

Animal Events

Because this booklet is a Guide and not a Manual, there is no intention to try to itemize all the different Animal Events, but it would be useful for you to understand how events are entered and how they interact with each record and with other events.

Event names are fixed. You cannot add a completely different kind of event, because we feel we have every possible physical event covered in our standard list. This is

important because events drive the database and drive other functions. For example, an AI event prompts a pregnancy check and changes the animal's status to "Bred". If you created, from scratch, an event called "Artificial Insemination", would you be able to write all the rules for how that event ripples throughout the program? Furthermore, could we write the module to give you that flexibility? No, to both answers, given a reasonable budget!

Do not be overwhelmed with the amount of information that is prompted for each event, sometimes over a dozen different items. Many events require only three pieces of data: The animal's ID; the date of the event; and the name of the event. Much of the rest is optional.



And here is the key: You need to decide how much of that additional you are going to use. **If you are not going to use it, do not enter it.** For example, if you always dry off your cows with exactly the same dry treatment, there is never going to be a need to compare efficacy, so do not record it (unless you want to use the Withdrawal Time Reports).

So while there is no intention to explain every field of every event (as we would in a manual), it would be useful to point out some tips that will help you on some of the events.

AI Event

While it is possible to declare an animal a particular number of days pregnant on the Pregnancy Diagnosis event, the program works much better if you enter the actual observed breeding information.

Pregnancy Diagnosis

There is no need to calculate and enter the number of days the animal is pregnant, unless she is pregnant to a breeding other than the most recent one, or there is no breeding information. DairyCHAMP will assume the most recent breeding to be the successful one and calculate the projected dry off and calving dates on that.

Rectal

If you are examining an animal that has been bred only a few days, do not use the Pregnancy Diagnosis event, because that will prevent her from coming up again when the pregnancy is far enough along to successfully diagnose. The Rectal event will allow you to record important reproductive information, without changing her status or eligibility for future pregnancy diagnoses.

Diagnosis / Treatment

A Diagnosis event will register one case of whatever problem you diagnose. If you re-treat her tomorrow, do not come back and use the Diagnosis event again, as that will register a second case and your disease incidence will be artificially inflated. Instead, use the Treatment event, which will not register a second case, even if you record what you are treating for.

Mastitis

Mastitis works a little differently to the Diagnosis / Treatment relationship. Each time you treat a cow for mastitis, use the Mastitis event. Under Program Set Up / Individual Farm Data / Biological Parameters, there is a setting for “Number of Days Between Mastitis Cases”, which defaults to 14 days. Thus if you enter three consecutive Mastitis events on consecutive days, DairyCHAMP will still count it as one case.

Move

You have two main choices for grouping your animals, and there is a big difference between the two. The vast majority of users should use the Location field for grouping animals, as this is a physical location, and an animal may only be in one physical location at any one time. Moving her to a new location automatically removes her from the current location.

Groups are assignments, theoretical groupings separate from Locations. And she may be in several Groups at once. Thus a cow may be in Location “High Producers” (only) while simultaneously being in “Feed Trial Group 1”, “Treatment Study 4” and “Purchased from Wally” Groups.

You can add Groups and Locations in Program Set Up.

Removed

DairyCHAMP never actually removes animals from your data set, unless you use the <Alt F8> key combination in Data Entry. When you remove an animal using the Removed event, the animal is given a status of removed, and her ID is changed, to suffix her ID with “RMMYY” where MM is the month of removal and YY is the year of removal. This frees up the ID she had on her last day to be used again by another animal.

Speeding Up Data Entry

Explore these options for speeding up data entry:

- Adding synonyms to the dictionary so fields become single-letter entry.
- Using the <F4> then <F7> tools in Data Entry, filtering the ID then selecting animals off that list using the <spacebar> for mass entry. This lends itself nicely to events that are identical from one animal to another (Vaccinations, Dry Offs, etc), but not well to events that are different from one animal to another (different semen IDs in the AI event)
- Availability of electronic event files from testing organizations and other support organizations
- Making sure your data collection forms match the order you will be entering information into DairyCHAMP.

Milk Events

There are two ways to get milk information into DairyCHAMP:

- Manually key-punching numbers into each cow's record
- Electronically importing data from an electronic file or from milk meter system.

In addition, there are two types of milk events:

- Monthly Milk, which need not be monthly, but is intended to be a regular recording of milk weights and probably components.
- Daily Milk, which usually comes in via a milk meter interface, but may be entered manually. You may record information on up to four milkings per day. However, a word of warning: Daily Milk Weights are never lost or archived, and there are 37 fields of information for each day, so your data set will become quite large quite quickly.

If you are on test, your first step will be to find out what information is available from your testing organization, starting with a herd history, then the monthly test file.

However you decide to access your milk data, it is important to enter that information as it is one of the primary ways to quantify the performance of the herd.

Farm Events

Farm Events are intended for those occurrences that are not applicable to any one particular animal, and are instead spread over the whole farm.

Bulk Tank readings, feed usage and general observations are examples of such broad events. They work in much the same way as Animal Events, prompting you for information in fields, and providing you with pull-downs lists for available vocabulary.

It is possible to electronically import some farm events where there is a lot of data, such as frequent bulk tank temperature readings or monthly statements from the creamery. Be careful though, that you do not spend more time setting up the import than it would have taken to simply type it in.

Data Collection Guidelines

Now you have added your herd history or manually added a few cow records. What is the next step? No matter how well we wrote this program, its usefulness will be limited unless you can:

- Get data collected and entered accurately and completely
- Get the information back to the people who use it, in a timely useable fashion.

Data is not useful to you. It is merely an unsorted list of events, such as collected in a dairy diary. Information is what you want, and what you want to give to your employees. You collect data; you use information.

Data Collection

In many ways, the most difficult part of learning this new program has nothing to do with the software itself. You need to establish a system of data collection and movement that is:

- Accessible to all
- Easy to use
- Complete

A system can easily be set up to be accessible. You can put a calendar or notebook in a central location, such as the changing room or milk house; and you can create forms that prompt for items in the order those items appear in Data Entry. But the balance of ease of use and completeness may be difficult. If the herdsman has to fill out huge forms just to record a heat, the chances are it will get postponed, then forgotten. Prompt for data you wish to collect (why a cow in heat was not bred, for example, if you think that is important). Just because DairyQuest 2000 prompts for particular items does not necessarily mean that you need to collect it.

Once collected, it needs to be transferred to the computer. Depending on the size of your herd, this can be once a day, every other day, or whatever. Just so long as you are consistent.

Returning Information

Timeliness and accuracy are the keys to good information, and the two go hand-in-hand. A perfect, wonderful list of cows that need watching is useless if the data that is driving it is a week old. Put the reports back in the same accessible location that you collected the data from. Encourage your employees to use the reports, and get feedback from your employees as to what they think would be even more useful.

Standard Reports

Now that you have a good idea of how Data Entry works – how we get information **in** – we now need to look at Reports -- how to get information **out**.

There are two types of reports in DairyCHAMP: Easy-to-use ready-to-run Standard Reports; and built-from-the-ground-up, completely flexible Custom Reports.



This first thing you will notice when you go to your list of reports is that it seems somewhat short. This is because we have provided the program to you with a default list, which you can change by going to Program Set Up / Program Information / Select Reports, and selecting Yes or No for each of the thirty-or-so reports.

Every report starts with a set up screen. However you organize this screen, that is how it will appear next time you come in. The set up screen allows you to make the report as broad or as narrow as you want, selecting date ranges, locations, animal types and so on.

One great feature of Standard Reports is the <F4> key, whereby you can add, remove, or change the column width of the items that are displayed in the report. Within the <F4>, the <F2> gives you access to the majority of the 500 database variables that drive the program. If you mess up your report completely, you can always press <Alt-F8> and re-set the report back to the factory defaults.

You should also investigate the <F4> key in the Performance Monitor, your major whole-herd analysis report. There you can choose from 300 analysis items and tailor the report to your operation.

So, you may wonder, with all this flexibility, isn't a standard report really a custom report in disguise? No, because no matter how much you change the settings on the Due to Dry Off list, the animals included are still those that are due to dry off. The underlying population has not changed, only the number of animals you have decided to display.

Not all reports have the <F4> list, as they are not list reports, for example the Service Success Report. However, every report has a set up screen of some kind.

One additional key that should be highlighted is the <F3> key in the Veterinary Selection Report. This screen dictates the rules by which animals are pulled up for examination by the veterinarian. The reasons the animal come up are identified on the report set up screen, but the rules behind those reasons are in the <F3>.

What should you do when a report fails to run? This is usually caused by some bad data in a very small number of cows (usually only one). This problem can be identified if you work with Tech Support to run a rebuild of the data and thereby list the problem animal. It may also be that you are not up-to-date with the latest version of DairyCHAMP, and again, Tech Support can help you there.

Again it should be stressed that it is not the job of this Guide to explain how each report is run, but instead point out the major functions and then encourage you to go exploring through the program.

So, once you have entered some data, you may like to go back to Program Set Up, turn on all the reports and then run them. At some point in the future you may decide which ones you regularly use and turn the rest off. You are not committing yourself to anything!

Custom Reports

While the Standard Reports are flexible and complete and can answer day-to-day questions, occasionally you need to ask more searching questions of your data set that Standard Reports cannot cover. This is where Custom Reports become an invaluable tool.

Be warned: Custom Reports can become difficult to write, especially when the question is a complex one. But the trade-off is that you get a report that is unique to your operation and answers those analytical questions that other reports can miss. You need a report that is just a little different, or more adventurous, or even something completely different.

So, now for something completely different....

The overall principle of Custom Reports is a very simple three-step process:

Tell DairyCHAMP....

- how you want the information displayed
- what information you want displayed
- how you want to limit the animals to be included

The key to the diagnostic ability of the DairyCHAMP program is contained in the third of these three factors.

Instead of being provided with the usual figures of, for example, milk production by lactation number, or conception rate by service number, you can pursue areas of concern by asking more searching questions, such as milk production by lactation number, but only for those cows that have had more than two cases of mastitis. So you can then have a better idea of how much production is being lost to clinical mastitis.

There are thousands upon thousands of potential reports that you could write in Custom Reports. Once mastered, they will unlock the diagnostic power of computerized dairy records.

So where do you begin? If all you want is a simple list of current animals, do not write a Custom Report. The Current Animal Status Standard Report will give you that in a fraction of the time it takes to set up a Custom Report. Instead, let's set up a report for all cows less than 100 days in milk.

How you want the information displayed

This is a list report, so select "List data" from the Type of Report field. This is the first of the three things that DairyCHAMP needs to know, the "how you want the information displayed".

What information you want displayed

In the Report Items box, press <F2>, and you will see the hundreds of items to choose from. If you are going to use Custom Reports a lot, you will need to familiarize yourself with the types of variables that are available to you. Select "ID" from the list. Press <F2> again and select "DIM". These two items are going to be your column headings, and also provide the second of the three things that DairyCHAMP needs to know, the "what information you want displayed".

How you want to limit the animals to be included



Whenever you run a Custom Report, always, **always** press the <F3> Filter key, as these are your main options for limiting the population in the report.

Most of them are self-explanatory, but one needs a little more explanation, along with a really useful little tip. The Ending Date of the report does not move with the system date, so if you run the report again in a month's time, it will only run to the old date, and you will need to re-set it. This is useful if you have a report covering "January Production", since the dates will remain fixed forever in January, but in most reports, you want current information.

Here comes the Big Tip. Set the Ending Date to a date way in the future such as 12/31/05, then you never need to worry about again, or at least not for a few years.

You will notice that there is no option in the <F3> for limiting the report by days in milk. That is because there are thousands of potential questions and we have to be very judicious in what is included in the limited space of the <F3>, which is where the Where Clause comes in.

Where Clause

The Where Clause is the single most complicated part of DairyCHAMP, but is the most powerful. It is a condition statement, using (for the technically-minded) Boolean logic to limit the population. Think of it as a cross between the English language and a mathematical equation.

In the example we are using, the Where Clause would read DIM < 100. This is about as straightforward as the Where Clause gets. By using the word “and” and “or” we can string together a series of statements to limit the report further. For example: DIM < 100 and reprostatus = “Pregnant”, which would find cows that are less than 100 days in milk and were currently pregnant.

Technical Support is a great source for helping you work through the Where Clause, and all other aspects of Custom Reports

For more advanced users who wish to export information to spreadsheets or other analysis tools, the <F9> key provides you with several formatting options.

If you want to share Custom Reports with your colleagues, every report that you run is saved as a separate file in the C:\DC3 directory with the file name that you gave it at the top of the set up screen, with the extension “.crp”.

There are three steps to becoming proficient with Custom Reports:

- Practice
- Practice
- Practice

.... And use tech support to help you develop new reports.

Interfaces

Getting information into DairyCHAMP quickly and efficiently enables you to move on to the true power of DairyCHAMP – analysis and decision-making. As much as we enjoyed writing the data entry portion of the program, we would prefer it if you did not spend all your time there!

Standard Interfaces

Every DairyCHAMP program comes equipped with every interface; you simply need to turn on the ones you want. Go to Program Set Up / Individual Farm Data / Interfaces and Herd Code, and select first the DHI interface you want to use. If you have electronic milk meters, turn that on here too.

Entering your DHI Herd Code here will help DairyCHAMP search for the correct files each month.

Some interfaces (such as Minnesota DHI) have an automated function for calling to the dial-up program, so you can access your data on-line. If you already have the file, skip the dial-up procedure and work with the existing file. Most interfaces require you to have the file in-hand before starting the procedure.

The standard interfaces should be self-explanatory, and you will be prompted throughout each procedure as to what to do next. Sometimes however, the file you wish to import is not a standard file for which we have written a specific canned interface. In this case, you need to set up a Custom Interface.

Custom Interfaces

The bad news is that the first time you set up a Custom Interface, you may have to invest some time in adjusting the settings to exactly match the incoming file. The good news is that you can save the settings so you never have to mess with them again.

You can carry out two types of Custom Interface: Import Data; and Export Data.

Exporting data generally would be an usual task, as exporting reports is usually carried out in Custom Reports, where you can be much more specific and flexible.

Importing data would be the task most commonly conducted in Custom Interfaces. The most likely scenario is importing the test file of a private tester, where we have not written a standard interface.



In order for DairyCHAMP to read the incoming file it must be in ASCII text format. Beyond that one rule, we can work with just about any file.

There are two types of text file that we encounter: Fixed-length Fields; and Column-delineated. The column delineated is the easier to work with, since you simply tell DairyCHAMP what information is in which column. Fixed-length Fields files (where the data is not broken up into identifiable columns, but is instead in long unbroken strings of characters and numbers) require that you specify where one piece of information ends and the next begins.

To do this, press the <F9> key and select “Yes” for Fixed-length Fields. The main set up screen for your Custom Interface now changes significantly, to prompt you for character spacing and identification. Toggle between viewing the file <F3> and specifying the character positions in the main set up screen. We help you with the character position in the view screen with the row of number across the top.

A:\41280080.CH1												
												more *
1	2	3	4	5	6	7						
12345678901	2345678901	2345678901	2345678901	2345678901	2345678901	2345678901	2345678901	2345678901	2345678901	2345678901	2345678901	2345678901
548	MADLIN	02/09/00	72	2.9	3.1	8590	18770	0	0	9	76	01/05/92
554	BOBBI	02/09/00	39	6.3	3.6	8980	13980	0	0	6	60	08/09/92
559	NATALY	02/09/00	103	3.0	3.0	10160	24270	0	0	1	101	09/08/92

Thus in the example, the computer number would start at character 3 and go for 3 characters. The test date would start at character 14 and end at 21, and so on. This example is of course, a column-delineated file, so this character spacing would not strictly be necessary, though it would still work this way.

You may also bring in Daily Milk Weights using this method, as well as Animal Events and Farm Events, although with the last two, the column order of the items must exactly match the order in which those fields appear in data entry, so it is of limited use.

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