DHI records are the backbone of U.S. dairy management and genetics. In addition DHI records provide benchmarks of milk production progress and efficiency. DHI records play an even greater integral role in the U.S. dairy production system than in the past. Dairy producers, nutritionists, veterinarians, milk and cheese plants and bankers look to DHI records as the standard for which data are collected, processed and returned to dairy producers and their support teams for use in managing dairy herds.

The Uniform Operating Procedures (UoPs) as part of the DHI and quality certification currently governing data collection have been in place since 2002. These UoPs are in the cycle of being updated to reflect the new technology and research that has been implemented in dairy production. The dairy industry demands a new system that offers dairy producers more flexible user-friendly service and yet provides the standardization and consistency needed for industry-wide programs such as management benchmarks and genetic evaluations. The updates will provide flexibility to all users of DHI records, thus enhancing the ability to respond to changing market opportunities.

To keep technology and the DHI system data capture and processing up-to-date, the three primary segments of the UoPs will be reviewed and updated:

1. Data collection
2. Code of Ethics
3. Release and Use of Records

UNIFORM OPERATING PROCEDURES and DATA COLLECTION

Uniform Operating Procedures specifically in data collection are methods essential to collecting quality data for herd management, genetic evaluations and research purposes. These procedures include items such as how to weigh and sample milk, how to calculate lactation records, and the identification of animals. These are cornerstones of data capture to enhance the usability and effectiveness of dairy management and genetics.

The DHIA System has a defined series of Testing Plans, with some examples as Standard, AM-PM, unsupervised or DHIR. These plans represent how data are collected on the farm on test day with regards to supervised or unsupervised plans and how many tests per 12 month period. For reference see http://www.dhia.org/testplan.pdf

UNIFORM OPERATING PROCEDURES and CODE of ETHICS

The Uniform Operating Procedures relating to the Code of Ethics is a guide to appropriate conduct for members participating with DHI. All practices and efforts should comply with the Code of Ethics as a basis to follow accepted or standard practices. Non-compliance of the code would be noted and could be viewed by entities seeking to determine the particular use and fitness of a dairy farm’s data. http://www.dhia.org/uop.pdf
UNIFORM OPERATING PROCEDURES and RELEASE and USE of RECORDS

DHI program members who want their records to be available for genetic evaluations or to other cooperators will select from one of the following options:

1. Open disclosure
2. Limited disclosure among allied industry partners participating in appropriate agreements

The DHI records from members choosing not to disclose their herd or cow data will not be provided to the Genetic Evaluation Program or allied industry cooperators.

Privacy Codes are available from DHI Service Providers and Dairy Records Processing Centers (DRPCs) to restrict the publication of records on a local or regional level. The privacy code does not affect the flow of records to USDA-AIPL for genetic evaluations or to other industry cooperators. Producers with religious (or other) objections to publication of records, but want their data included in the genetic evaluation program, should use the privacy code to have this data flow as to their wishes.

BREED ASSOCIATION ACCESS and USE of DHI DATA

Breed associations and other industry allies have relied on “type of test” to categorize the use of production records for the breed association and the industry. The DHI environment and breed associations made revisions to breed association production records programs in the late 1990s and early 2000 time period to incorporate the UoP guidelines, Type of Test Plans and Data Collection Rating (DCR). The DCR calculates a percentage value based on the frequency of tests, supervision and number of milk component samples collected during the test period. These DCRs generally have some type of cut off levels for breed recognition programs for production.

The Holstein Association USA, American Jersey Cattle Association and Brown Swiss Cattle Breeders have specific programs that tie the classification frequency to the DHI tests that enhance the old DHIR programs and to expand participation by breeders in combination type and production programs.

CHANGE TO REFLECT THE TIMES

These updates will be through a process of task Forces that will include dairy producers, DHIAs, DRPCs, Breed Associations, AI organizations and allied industry cooperators. The broad input will build and work to include the best thinking and delivery of update UoPs.

The DHI system and Quality Certification program remains a critical component of the DHI System and is in place to provide credibility and guidelines to provide standards for dairy producers across the U.S. In a natural evolution these efforts and UoPs are being revised to support the new technologies and the changing biology of the dairy cow. Look for the updates to these UoPs throughout 2013.