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Online farm software

VeeManager is an online farm management package developed by NRS. With this application dairy farmers can save time through less paperwork and reduce costs of farm management information.

VeeManager is a combination of the most useful and practical management information through the internet, like Milk recording, Cow management and Animal registration. Dutch dairy farmers can subscribe to this internet application that is linked to the national IRIS database. This way they only have to input data once, which is easy and saves time. Moreover, they will always have their data up-to-date, complete and rapidly at their disposal.

Complete

The package includes herd management information, animal registration facilities and reports to comply with administrative requirements. The service provides all milk recording and Somatic Cell Count information for herd management. Cow registration cards are included, which are always up-to-date through to the latest daily production and offspring. Information of all herdbook-registered animals born on the farm during the last thirty years is available. Also provided is an overview on one A4 sheet to analyse the performance of the herd at a glance. Another overview

shows more information at cow level: it indicates deviations in production, udder health and shows the cows that qualify for drying off, calving, inseminating, and heat and pregnancy check. Next there are more focused overviews like Fertility Monitor, which shows all management guides and target values related to fertility. VeeManager makes keeping up with the animal administration simple. The dairy farmer can input online the events for I&R, like announcements of birth, arrival and departure of animals. He can register DIY inseminations. All data is linked. He can always see what he entered and print the data or reports.

With VeeManager participants also have the legally bound reports at their disposal at all times, like Minas (Mineral

A word from NRS

All Holland Dairy Show

On 30 June-1 July 2006 the most beautiful black & white and red & white cows will enter the ring as part of the All Holland Dairy Show. Bulls in the Netherlands don't only produce offspring with which dairy farmers achieve good economic results, they also sire animals that are a feast for the eye. A strict selection committee is selecting the 300 best cows for the bi-annual show. In addition to this competition, there also are presentations of a large number of progeny groups. Nowhere else do so many progeny groups enter the ring, with more than 25 daughter groups in total. The previous show was attended by almost 15,000 visitors, which shows how much interest there is in cattle breeding in the Netherlands. Around 1,000 foreign visitors also came to the show. This year we again warmly invite you to visit the show and to inspect with your own eyes the daughters of the current top Dutch bulls.

*Hans Huijbers,
president of CR Delta,
chairman of the organizing
committee*



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Administration System) and Holder register.

No worries

The difference with locally installed farm management software is that dairy farmers don't have to worry about the installation of new versions. The application is always kept up-to-date without any extra costs. Next, the dairy farmer can give permission for his advisors, for example the feed advisor or veterinarian, to view his records. The advisor can login and keep an eye on the

farm results and provide better-focused advice.

Reducing costs

VeeManager is cheaper than the reports on paper and competitive with farm management packages. Participants pay a fixed amount per year plus an amount per animal per year. Or instead of the complete package, farmers can also take a subscription on certain modules.

*Petra Galesloot,
marketing & sales IRIS*



VeeManager enables dairy farmers to view their herd information via the internet

VRV starts with IRIS

VRV has officially started a complete new milk recording system using IRIS. The introduction of the new system was the most far-reaching step affecting information products since the foundation of VRV.

The launch included implementation of the milk recording module of IRIS4, implementation of a new PDA (Personal Digital Assistant) application for milk samplers and the introduction of new farmer reports. For the IT team these were

intense weeks. The data on the old VRV system was converted to the IRIS database at NRS, which is accessed by VRV via the internet. "Such a mega-operation is always exciting because external factors, like a defect in the hardware or in the

connection, could always put a spanner in their works", commented IT project leader Erwin Speybroeck.

Many farmers came to the information sessions to learn how to interpret the reports. The reactions showed that they have an obvious added value for the Flemish farmers. The dairy farmers receive extra information about their cattle, so that many problems can be avoided and the farmers can take radical measures based on sound information. VRV had the privilege of welcoming many new participants. The new possibilities regarding frequency and the method of milk recording is especially appealing to the newcomers.

VRV's IT team at the tail end of the implementation



Petra Galesloot

Customer profile

ICBF in Rep. of Ireland will host the coming IRIS User Group Meeting 29-31 May 2006. As IRIS customer from the very beginning, it will be interesting to learn how a complete infrastructure evolved around IRIS at ICBF. Mr Brian Wickham, ICBF's chief executive, gives a brief introduction to ICBF and the Irish cattle industry.

What are characteristics of the Irish cattle industry?

Ireland has 2.1 million cows of which half are dairy and half beef. Both the dairy and beef industries are largely export based with substantial exports of milk products, beef and live animals to other EU countries and to a lesser extent the rest of the world. Ireland's cattle breeding is characterised by a lot of cross breeding of commercial cattle in both the dairy and beef herds.

What kind of organisation is ICBF?

ICBF (the Irish Cattle Breeding Federation Society Limited) was formed in 2000 and is owned by a combination of the cattle breeding industry (AI, Milk Recording and Herdbooks) and farmers. The main objective for ICBF is the genetic improvement of Irish cattle. ICBF is responsible for developing and operating the IRIS database used by the cattle breeding industry, for providing genetic evaluations and for leading the development of the industry.

What are recent developments at ICBF?

In 2005 ICBF established a new system for providing genetic evaluations for beef traits. This system provides across breed evaluations and includes a number of new economic indexes for beef breeding decisions. It uses carcase data collected from slaughter factories as well as performance data collected from pedigree and non-pedigree cattle. ICBF is currently rolling-out handheld computers for recording artificial inseminations. These provide the technician with access to the details of each cow in the herd and employs GPRS technology to communicate with ICBF's database. A new milk recording system based on the use of TruTest's portable electronic milk meter is currently being



Beef crossbred

introduced to all parts of Ireland. This system provides paperless milk recording while reducing the amount of labour required. The main motivation for introducing this service has been to reduce the cost of milk recording.

What are your plans for the future?

ICBF's focus has now moved to establishing an optimal breeding scheme for all breeds of cattle in Ireland. The first move was the introduction of GEN€ IRELAND® in 2005. In close collaboration with ICBF's AI members this scheme is focused on securing the best bulls for progeny testing and then ensuring they are accurately progeny tested on Irish farms. It is planned that this scheme will be expanded to cover all major beef and dairy breeds in Ireland. ICBF is also now working very closely with its members to ensure more farmers participate in animal event recording, milk recording, pedigree registration and use AI to breed superior replacement animals. Our overall goal and plan for the future is to increase the rate of genetic improvement from €5/animal/year to €23/animal/year.

Brian Wickham

Members of ICBF in Rep. of Ireland making use of the cattle information system





News bulletin

Daughter company in Luxembourg

CRV Holding has started a new daughter company in Luxembourg. The new company, which operates under the name GenLux, started in January with the sale of semen and inseminating. To follow, milk recording and, at a later stage, type classification and sire advice will be introduced to the Luxembourg farmers. Until the end of 2005, two organisations were active in Luxembourg: Service Elevage et Genetique (SEG) and Federation des Herd-Books Luxembourgeois (FHL). CR Delta worked together with SEG for a long time and the cattle data of SEG was, like many others around the world, processed in IRIS. From 1 January 2006 SEG and FHL joined forces to make the new organisation. Therefore has CRV established a daughter company in Luxembourg. Genlux will offer a total package and is expected to be very competitive. Luxembourg has more than a thousand dairy farms. The new company will be under the capable management of Mr Gilbert Nies.

High heritability milk urea

Milk urea can be used as an indicator of the energy-protein balance in dairy cow diets and as a predictor of nitrogen excretion. Therefore the interest in milk urea is growing from a nutritional and environmental point of view. Values of milk urea between 20 and 25mg/ml are considered normal, while higher values are undesirable in the new environmental policy in the Netherlands. NRS has shown that a large part of the variation between cows in milk urea is due to genetic differences between cows. The heritability of lactation average milk urea was 0.75 and estimated breeding values for bulls ranged from -11 to +8mg/ml. Further research should explain the origin of the genetic differences and whether it is useful to estimate breeding values.

Genetic markers for breeding

Genetic markers are becoming more and more important in the breeding program of HG. With normal breeding, the genetic characteristics of a bull become apparent when a lot of daughters are in lactation and a breeding value is estimated. Genetic markers however indicate the hereditary characteristics of a bull in an early stage. Now HG can determine with a wisp of hair whether a newborn bull calf will be selected for the breeding program. For example, if two full brothers have the same pedigree index. On the basis of seven markers for production, durability, calving ease and fertility, HG chooses which calf to use for progeny testing. The genetic markers have added value for durability and functional traits especially, because normal cattle breeding for these traits takes a long time and many functional traits have a low heritability. Genetic markers lead to more efficient young bull testing and time gain. Also a higher percentage of young bulls qualify as proven sires. The breeding values based on marker information are more consistent than normal breeding values.

IRIS User Group Meeting

Date: 29-31 May 2006
Host: Irish Cattle Breeding Federation
Location: Cork, Rep. of Ireland

All Holland Dairy Show

Date: 30 June-1 July 2006
Location: Utrecht, the Netherlands

