

The importance of high quality and consistent dairy farm management data for dairy farm advisors

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Efficiency is a key factor in the dairy farming industry, being needed to ensure farmer's profitability and provide top cow welfare conditions in a sustainable environment and with herds that are growing in size. Dairy farmers to a large extent have changed and started to adopt more automation and cow monitoring technologies in order to be more efficient. This includes the massive adoption of different kinds of farm management software. The access, availability and especially quality of the information provided to dairy farm consultants that helps farmers continuously on their important management decisions is of vital importance. Dairy farm consultants (veterinarians, reproduction advisors, feeding advisors, udder health specialists, etc) are constantly exposed to the information that the farmers provide from their different on-farm softwares, needing to understand the background but in many cases they need also to navigate, extract and organize the information by themselves. If the consultant is interested also to benchmark and compare the data coming from different farms, it is normally not possible due to differences in the algorithms and on the cows being selected for the calculations. Addressing the challenges of dairy farm consultants can be possible, with a system that extracts data from all different software at farm level, uploads it to a series of servers where it gets cleaned, normalized and stored. This process ensures that all data sets coming from different data sources are standardized and allows a reliable comparison of key performance indicators (KPIs) among different farms. The accessibility for the advisor is through a web interface. Strict rules for the usage of data are required, and farmer authorization is mandatory to grant access to the data for specific consultants or organizations. The impact of advice, through the implementation of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) or defined treatments; the monitoring of objective KPIs for sustainability, or the use of the platform for new ground research are only some examples where this new platform can help bring the dairy industry efficiency to a higher level.

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