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News

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[Igenity profile provides dairymen management tool](#)

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MADISON, Wis. — Dairymen now have more information to use when making decisions for their herds with the newly updated Igenity profile.

“The Igenity profile now provides producers with information about cow longevity which includes both dairy form and productive life,” stated Jennifer Daniels, business development manager for Igenity, at Merial. Merial representatives spent lots of time talking to dairymen about the new Igenity profile during the World Dairy Expo last week in Madison, Wis.

“We have had intense interest from producers that has far exceeded our expectations,” Daniels reported. “Dairy producers have been rushing the Merial booth to find out about Igenity.”

Through DNA technology, the Igenity profile is available from Merial and from Select Sires.

“Now producers have a way to predict an animal’s productive life at a young age,” Daniels said. “This profile can indicate a female’s potential for milk production before she is bred.”

And, since an animal’s DNA doesn’t change, she continued, “this profile can be used to make decisions over the animal’s lifetime.”

Merial introduced Igenity to producers four years ago. Now producers receive a single profile that provides information about: milk production traits, including milk, fat, percent fat, protein and percent protein; cheese production traits including kappa casein, beta casein and beta lactoglobulin; longevity including dairy form and productive life; coat color and genetic diseases including BLAD, DUMPS and CVM.

“The profile can be used as a selection tool to decide whether to keep or sell heifers, as a breeding tool to make more precise mating decisions or as a tool for making culling decisions,” the Merial spokesperson explained.

The Igenity profile scores range from 1 to 10 for each economically important trait analyzed. “According to the USDA, the average life of a dairy cow is 2.6 lactations,” the development manager said. “There is a difference of 3.44 months of productive life between a cow receiving a score of 1 and a score of 10 for productive life – that adds an average of 10 percent to a dairy cow’s life.”

Merial developed this 1 to 10 scoring system since multiple marker combinations are used for the profile.

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"We've taken the gene interactions and distilled them into simple information for the producers," Daniels explained. "We scored the traits from 1 to 10 because not all the markers are equal."

With this 1 to 10 scale, each dairyman can decide which trait is most important for his operation.

"Producers get all the information for one price and then they can decide how to use the information for selecting animals," the Merial spokesperson said. "With all the information provided on each animal it also helps producers avoid making decisions on single trait selection."

To get the Igenity profile on an animal, producers contact Merial for a free kit that includes enough supplies to gather DNA material on 10 animals. To gather a DNA sample, producers simply swab the nostril of the animal or use a drop of blood.

"We will return the results by mail, fax or e-mail and this information is confidential to the customers unless they request the results are sent to a breed association," Daniels said. "The cost is \$35 per profile plus \$20 if they include the CVM."

Merial is continuing to work to identify gene markers for all kinds of traits like immune response, fertility and mastitis. "Our promise to customers today is that we will provide them with access to new technology at the lowest possible cost," Daniels stressed. "We don't want producers to feel like they have to wait to get involved with DNA technology."

"Now is the time for producers to use this exciting technology which is helping to shape the dairy and beef industries," Daniels concluded.

For more information about Igenity, visit the website at: www.igenity.com or call (877) 443-6489.

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