

Real-time data entry prompts real-time actions

Live performance

NMR went live with its real-time data entry system in September. This sophisticated development means that producers can enter events as they happen. And, better still, the data seamlessly populates management systems and gives immediate access to up-to-date action lists and reports.

text **Karen Wright**

Judging by the uptake by vets and producers, NMR's move to live real-time data entry that can immediately generate up-to-date action lists and reports is a welcome development. So says NMR's software trainer Cath Smith.

"It's an option open to all NMR recording customers," she adds, admitting that it is likely to—and she hopes it will—encourage a lot more to use the web-based NMR system Herd Companion. "All events can be entered using a tablet or

office PC onto the Herd Companion web site as they happen. Eventually data will be able to be entered on a smart phone. An internet connection will mean that data immediately updates the NMR records with calvings, PD tests, services, mastitis records – the lot. It's an easy process and free for NMR users, and it's designed to suit all levels of herd management."

Newcomers to Herd Companion need to register, just as they would for any online service. "But don't be put off – we've made it very secure without being complicated," she adds.

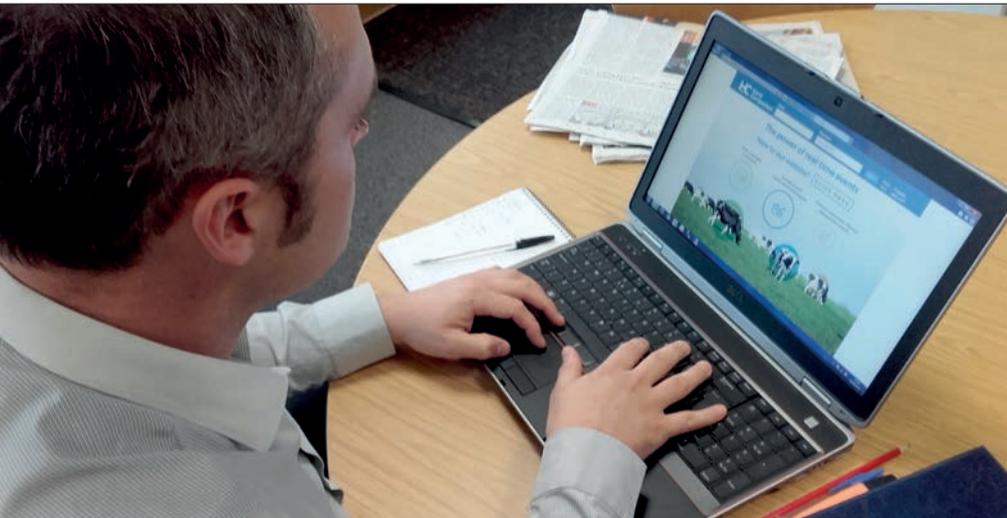
And there's plenty of help on hand to deal with queries too. "We've made a video for users to watch and there's a telephone helpline, with extended hours."

Useful data

Every producer – and vet – knows the benefit of up-to-date reports. Collecting data in real-time is only useful if it is used to update the data and provide current reports. "NMR has taken this on

Real-time data entry and more up-to-date reports are proving popular with vets and producers alike





New data is entered and used to update Herd Companion reports as well as linking with other dairy management systems seamlessly and immediately

Cath Smith: "Using current data brings a massive step up in herd management"

board with its real-time data entry system," adds Mrs Smith. "It's all very well patting ourselves on the back and offering real-time data entry, but we have to offer real benefits to our users." And there are, indeed, plenty of benefits. NMR real-time data entry transfers new information seamlessly into the Herd Companion reports and beyond.

"So even those just starting to use Herd Companion can get new action lists and management reports that have been updated with data they've literally just entered. And the iReports on Herd Companion will be able to group and rank cows with updated information and use multiple filters to home in on the individual cows needing attention."

This latest development also has real-time links with the dairy management systems InterHerd+ and UNIFORM. And new developments, introduced recently by UNIFORM, allow the data flow in two directions. For those with this system, information will pass seamlessly from UNIFORM to the NMR records immediately.

Other links will also be added, including those with BCMS and regulatory organisations. "This synchronising of data cuts out duplication and with this will come improved accuracy and reliability," adds Mrs Smith. "And when it comes to herd management, up-to-date action lists and reports will aid decision making."

This latter point is probably why many vets have welcomed NMR's real-time data entry development. "We have a lot of vets using InterHerd+ and UNIFORM Agri systems. They have been working from reports generated from the latest milk recording, which could be up to 30 days old in a monthly recorded herd. Now, if the producer is

updating events regularly, they will be using current information. A lot can happen in a month in a milking cow."

Real-time, real-action

PD results entered onto Herd Companion at lunchtime, after morning tests, can then be viewed. "So within a few hours the vet can see the latest pregnancy report and immediately pick up on any problems in individuals or trends in the group."

Likewise, real-time data entry will speed up the identification, through Herd Companion, of cows with repeated mastitis or lameness cases. "The vet or consultant can recommend the appropriate action before the problem gets worse. Changes can be made without delay.

"This is a massive step up in herd management and decision making, compared with relying on data that could be up to a month old."

While NMR recorders will still carry out data entry, those using the real-time system will find that once the recorder downloads their herd data the data

entry facility will be locked. "Hopefully it will only be locked for 24 to 48 hours prior to recording. Any events happening between times can be entered by the recorder at the farm visit. It means that all parties will be working from the same data."

Fully trained

"And we are aware that some producers may only enter certain events, leaving the recorder to enter the rest. This won't be a problem as recorders can see, from the recording system, what information has been entered throughout the month. Our teams of recorders have had extensive training so they will be familiar with the latest developments. And, like producers, they will have the support of NMR helplines."

Through real-time recording, NMR hopes that producers will break away from the idea that recording is a monthly activity. "We will encourage them to take advantage of real-time recording and of all the benefits it brings in terms of improved data and better cow management," adds Mrs Smith. |

Real-time in a nutshell

- All NMR users can enter real-time data through NMR's Herd Companion on line system, 24/7. This is available free of charge for all NMR-recorded herds.
- New data will automatically transfer to the NMR records and synchronise with NMR herd data on multiple management systems.
- No need for duplicate entry.
- NMR recorders will enter events from the point that they 'request' the herd sheets prior to recording when on farm data entry is 'frozen' to prevent duplication.
- New data security features added so producers control access to herd data by setting up specific access permissions (rather than sharing login details and passwords).
- Producers, herd staff, vets and advisers will work from up-to-date action lists and reports facilitating improved decision making and herd management.