

Coming Soon:

Cow Livability Evaluations

What is cow Livability?

Beginning in August 2016, the Council on Dairy Cattle Breeding (CDCB) will be releasing cow Livability (LIV) evaluations. LIV will identify sires that have high or low mortality rates in their daughters and is based on 40 years of culling data collected from DHIA records. Available for all breeds, LIV will be expressed as the percent of daughters that remain alive in the herd until they can be culled and provide a source of income for the herd. Approximately 20 percent of dairy cows die and do not generate income at the end of their productive life which means a loss of approximately \$800 million in cull income for the U.S. dairy industry per year.

How is Livability different from Productive Life?

Since Productive Life (PL) was introduced in 1994 and incorporated into selection programs, cow health has improved. However, since PL predicts how long a cow is expected to remain in the milking herd without dying or being culled, we do not know whether the cow provided additional income at the end of their life in the herd. LIV is one of several traits that determines PL and one that, until now, has not been available. PL can predict which cows will remain in the herd longer, but does not specifically predict if there will be additional income from voluntary or involuntary culling. Although PL and LIV are correlated, the correlation is low enough that both LIV and PL provide value to genetic evaluations and breeding programs.

What should we expect from Livability?

Although the heritability of mortality is relatively low, the accuracy of LIV is high because of the 92 million lactation records for 32 million cows that have been recorded in DHIA over several decades. Even young genomic sires average 56 percent reliability for LIV. Values for LIV will range from approximately -5 to +5.

In the future it is likely LIV will be incorporated into all four lifetime merit indexes available from CDCB with a predicted weight of 7 percent.

After August sire summary results have been released, you will be able to find a listing of current Select Sires lineup bulls and their LIV on our website (www.selectsires.com).



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