Case Study

DataGene
Solutions for Herd Development

HerdData puts everyone on same page

Dairy farmer: Heather Campbell

Region: Northern Victoria

Topic: HerdData

In the space of nine months Heather Campbell has gone from working for Genetics Australia to working on a dairy farm and becoming a partner with other members of her family in a recently purchased dairy farm at Cohuna in Northern Victoria.

This busy time has been made a little easier as a result of good farm records and easy access to herd data using DataGene's Herd Data app.

Heather started working for Stephen and Margot Henty at Cohuna in October last year and has been involved in milking and more recently in calf recording for the Hentys' 160 cow herd.

The family partnership – made up of Heather and her partner Chris, her brother Robert Campbell and his partner Joanne, and their mother Janet – purchased the neighbouring dairy farm this year and are now milking their own herd of 220 cows.

The HerdData app is used in both the family's and the Hentys' herds as a way of allowing easy access to cow records and to streamline recording information such as animal health treatments and calving records.

"I originally spotted an advertisement for the app in *The Weekly Times* and decided we should give it a go as a way of simplifying manging and accessing herd records," she said.

"The HerdData app is synchronised to the Mistro programs managing the records for both herds, allowing the most up to date records to be recorded and updated on the phone app.

"We've been very busy as a family in a very short time and using the HerdData app on a phone has made keeping track of herd information so easy.

Heather Campbell: "I can access all the data I need on my phone on the spot."

"I have a copy of the app on my phone and Robert and Joanne have copies as well. It means we all have access of the most up to date herd records with us all the time on our phones. As Joanne says, we are all on the same page with HerdData."
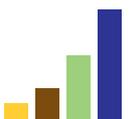
Heather and her family can also record events and treatments on their phones as they happen during the day and then synchronise the data with the home computer.

"In the past I would have had to print off a paper copy of various records on the home computer then take the paper copy with me to the dairy or out in the paddock, then enter data on the home computer at the end of the day," Heather said.

"I don't need paper lists anymore because I can access all the data I need on my phone on the spot.

"We jumped in the deep end with a new herd but have been able to use the previous owner's Mistro records and then link them to the phone app – it's been extremely handy."

Heather has been able to upload a calving list on her phone and then use the sort function to arrange the list by the cows' due-to-calve date.

This has made it easier when drafting off cows into groups for lead feeding or identifying cows which are overdue.

Calving information has also been recorded on the phone then synchronised back to the home computer.

"We had a lot of cows calving in a very short time frame – there were a lot of records we needed to check and data we needed to record. Being able to access information and record it on the HerdData app made things easier," Heather said.

The HerdData app is used to record and access animal health treatments such as dry cow treatments, vaccinations, drenches and one-off veterinary treatments for individual sick cows for both herds.

The app generates a list of cows which are within withholding periods and can also list an individual cow's treatment history.

DataGene's HerdData app has given Heather Campbell and her family easy access to herd records (pictured with her brother Robert).

"The HerdData app gives us all have access to the most up-to-date herd records. It means we all on the same page with herd records."

– Heather Campbell, Northern Victoria, who milks 220 cows Holstein and crossbreds

The ability to access the most recent herd test reports on the phone app also helped when making decision on which cows to cull.

Heather said the app operated well in areas where phone coverage was variable.

"The phone coverage on our farm is marginal but we can still use the HerdData app to input data and access the information stored on the phone," she said.

"You need phone coverage to synchronise the data on the phone with the data on the home computer, but once the data is updated on the phone then you can access it even if you don't have phone reception."

The HerdData app was developed by DataGene – an initiative of Dairy Australia and the Australian herd recording sector, with the assistance of participating herd testing centres.

The app is suitable for Android and Apple tablets or phones and can be downloaded from IOS AppStore or GooglePlay.

The annual subscription is $99 a year. which includes data synchronisation and upgrades.

DataGene
Solutions for Herd Development

December 2017