Reading a DHIA Sheet:

At the top of the page starting in the top left hand corner and working to the right:

Breed: this will be an abbreviation HO: Holstein, JE: Jersey, etc

Type test: Don’t worry about this!

Under monthly report:

Test dates: the exact date that the last two samples were taken and then processed at the lab

The Number 63-26-0062: The producer’s DHIA herd code #, under that is the owner of the farm and/or the farm name

DHI-210: Don’t worry about that or the page # underneath

The Numbers Part:

Start with page 1 of 9 and we will talk about each column

1. Breed: our herd is a Jersey herd so we have the breed code of JE
2. Sire Id: this is the number on top, this is the sire code given to them at their respective bull studs. 7J670 is a bull named Geronimo from Select Sires. You won’t need to know the specifics, just that that is the sire’s info
3. Permanent ID: This is the COW’s registration number for a registered herd or her permanent ID # if she is grade. Nothing special about this one
4. Somatic Cell Count and Milk Weights by Test Day: This is a lot of numbers crammed into one space so lets take it slow. The test month column will have a number at the top. The first one is 4 and that means the first information is from April 2012. The next column is May 2012 and so on. The numbers always correspond with the test month. You will notice that we did not test in February. The most current test month has the exact day the test samples were pulled. Under each month, the cow’s SCS (somatic cell score) and milk weight are listed. So on April 2012, this cow had a SCS of 2.5 and milked 55# in one day. The next month, she had a SCS of 0.1 and 54# of milk on that day. As you go across her record, she was turned dry after the Sept test and then calved back in time for the January test. On her most recent test date (3/4/13) she had a SCS of 0.7 and milked 96#. She also had 3.2% protein and 3.6% fat in that milk sample. For SCS, you want this number **as close to 0** as possible. With the milk, protein% and fat %, you want these numbers to be **as high as possible.**  All the milk weights are in pounds and the fat and protein are in percentages.
5. Lactation to Date: This is information just about the cow. This cow has had 8 lactations meaning that she has calved 8 times. She was 9 years and 3 months old when she calved the last time. In status date/code column, this is when something changed on this lactation. On 12/18, she calved. The way you know this is that you look at the date (duh!) and then go to the bottom of the page looking for the status code box. She has a 2 in her code box which corresponds to calved in the box. We have just being calling this lovely bovine lady “cow” when in fact she is known as C19 as her barn name. This is the number on the bottom while her index # is 219. Some of the cows will have only an index number which means that they have the same barn name and index number. With herds that use names, the actual name would be under barn name. The next column is CAR/DIM. CAR is condition affecting record. If there is a letter or number in the top part of the box, go to the bottom of the page and look in the CAR box to see what is odd about her. DIM stands for days in milk and just counts back from the date of the milk test (3/4/13) to her calving date (12/18/12) to give you how long she has been milking. The next column tells you how much milk she has made in her 77 DIM. Through a long and complicated graph of who knows what kind of formulas, DHIA has figured that she has milked 6,843 pounds so far. This milk has had an average of 3.2% protein and 3.5% butterfat (next column). In the column that just says pro/fat, DHIA has computed that she has made 217 pounds of protein and 238 pounds of butterfat (or fat for short). They then have rated C19 as a B cow. If you knew this cow, B would stand for bodacious but in DHIA terms, she is above average. This rating box is at the bottom of the page in the far right hand corner.
6. ME Pro/ME Milk: ME stands for mature equivalent. Once again, a complicated formula we don’t have to worry about! What is does is compare all the animals in a herd to a “mature cow”. I don’t know the exact age they use but C19 actually is considered geriatric so she gets brownie points for being old while a younger cow would get consideration given to her for being young. It is projected that C19 will give 725# of protein and 21,978# of milk in this lactation on a ME basis.
7. ERPA (estimated relative production average) Milk: This number tells how much money the cow is making or losing for you based on production and feed costs. You want this number to first be positive and then to be as high as possible.
8. Breeding info: for this cow this is hard to describe because she has nothing yet so drop down to D17. The previous column describes what happened to the cow before she was confirmed pregnant. In the repro column, it tells you the last 2 times she was bred. If you look at the repro code box at the far left bottom of the page, you can see she was bred once on 10/20 and then for a second time on 11/10. Under Current: Intvl. Days is the number of days between her heat cycles so this cow has a 26 day estrus cycle. Repro in this column can once again be figured out by looking at the repro code box in the lower left hand bottom of the page. So D17 was diagnosed pregnant to the third service (time she was bred) on 12/6. She was bred to bull 7J1067 and is due to calve on 9/11/13. The last column tells you that when she was turned dry in May and June, she was dry for 61 days. Now how did I know when she was turned dry? Go back to the SCS and Milk weights by test day columns and you will noticed that in month 5 and 6 there is the word DRY. The last number is days open. D17 was milking for 136 days before she was successfully bred and confirmed pregnant.