

# Assessing the Economic Value of a Cow, the Value of a New Pregnancy, and the Cost of a Pregnancy Loss

- Knowing the cow value is crucial for optimal dairy farm decision-making
- The value of a cow decreases when the cow:
  - Remains non-pregnant through lactation
  - Suffers an abortion
  - Gets older in successive lactations
  - Gets sick or injured
  - Is expected to produce less than the other cows in the herd
- The value of a cow increases when the cow:
  - Becomes pregnant
  - Is expected to produce more than the other cows in the herd
  - Remains healthy
- The most important factors in determining the economic value of a cow is the expectancy of the future performance of the evaluated cow and the potential replacement.
- Herd factors such as reproductive performance or turnover ratio have only limited impact on the relative economic value of a dairy cow
- Economic factors such as milk price or feed costs have also only limited impact on the relative economic value of a dairy cow.
- The study developed into an online user-friendly decision support tool available at the UW Dairy Management Website

## RESOURCES

**Victor E. Cabrera,**  
Assistant Professor  
Extension Specialist in  
Dairy Management  
Dairy Science  
608-265-8506  
1675 Observatory Drive  
Room 279  
Madison, WI 53706

## WEB

[DairyMGT.info](http://DairyMGT.info)

December 2012

Excerpt from: Cabrera, V. E. 2012. A simple formulation and solution to the replacement problem: A practical tool to assess the economic cow value, the value of a new pregnancy, and the cost of a pregnancy loss. *Journal of Dairy Science*95:4683-4698.

