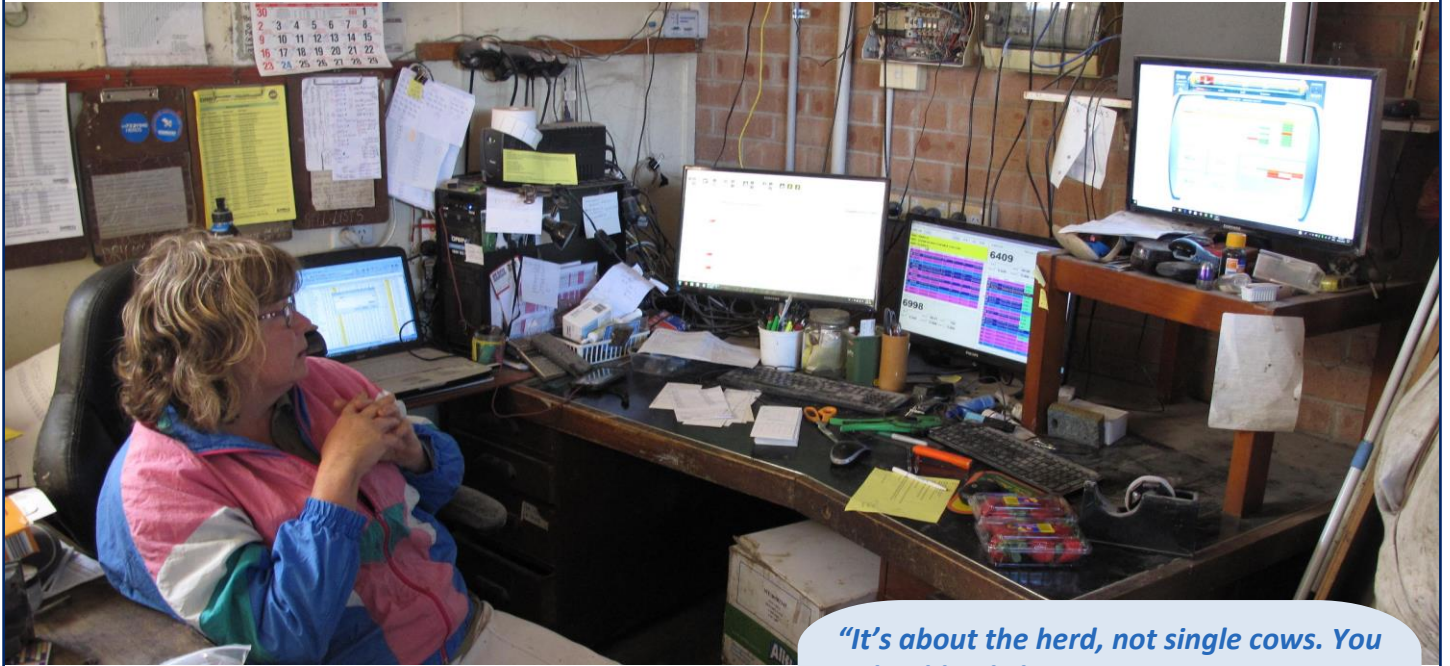


# TechKISS Topic: Herd Management Software

Nov- 2019



*"It's about the herd, not single cows. You should only have to use one computer system, and all information should transfer automatically."*

- CW

Dairy herd management software stores and analyses data collected across the lifetime of cows, including mating records, lactations and health events. Reports and applications vary between software products.

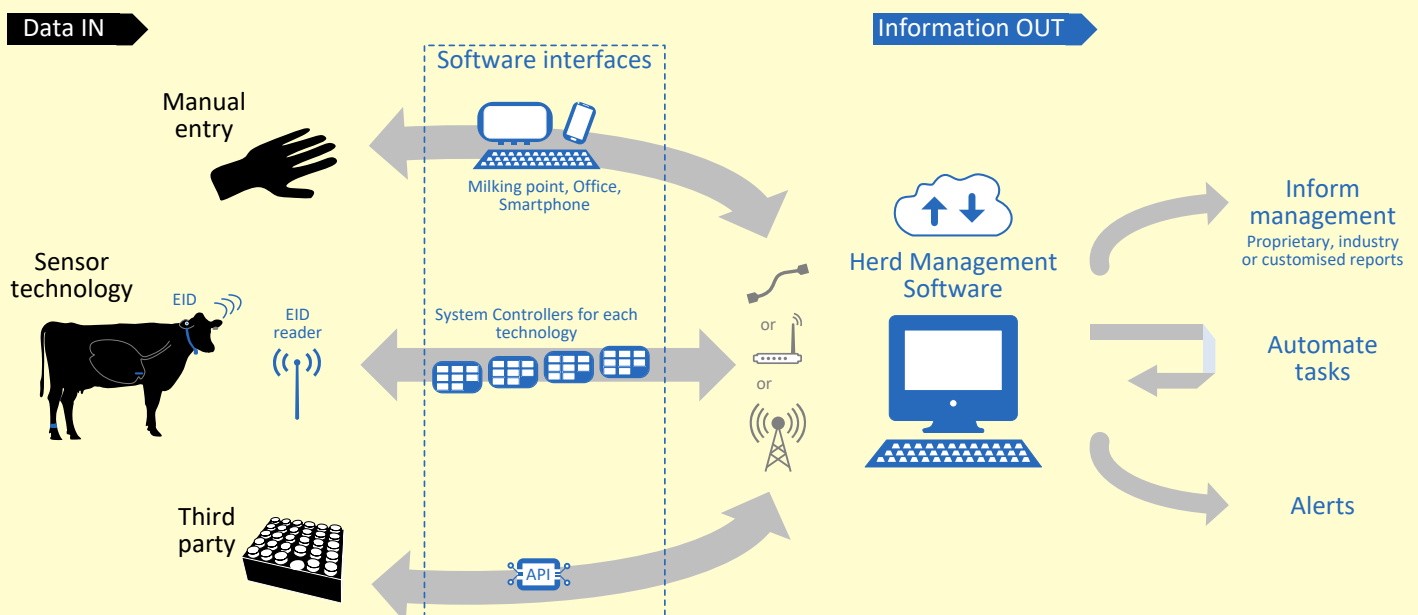
Herd management software (HMS) that is smart:

- Has the **software interfaces** (computer code) it needs to automatically transfer data with other systems, eg
  - **Sensor data** flows in and out of the HMS through the various **system controllers**
  - **Application Program Interfaces (API)** enable herd test results to be uploaded and downloaded
- Provides management with the **information** it needs:
  - Relevant herd lists and reports
  - Data coordination to automate tasks
  - Data combination for robust health alerts.

## Benefits

- ★ Summarises key aspects of herd performance (production, health, nutrition, reproduction)
- ★ Informs day-to-day management (generate lists for preg test or dry-off, check history etc)
- ★ Automates tasks (auto-draft for examination, customised feeding etc)

## The smart parts



# Making Herd Management Software Work For Your Farm

## Tips & traps from TechKISS study farmers



### Choosing herd software

- Know what you want out of the system
  - Ask your farm advisers (nutritionists, vet, farm consultant) what metrics they want
  - Check that reports are easy to modify (default settings may not be applicable)
- Go for integration, get software that:
  - Works with other tech on the farm
  - Automatically uploads herd test results (if relevant for your farm)
  - Easily imports and exports data
- Get the IT functionality you want
  - Does it have a mobile app (can see and enter data in real-time)?
  - What happens when the system is not connected to the internet?



### Technical support

- Ensure issues can be fixed in a reasonable time (may depend on your type of service support subscription)
- Organise for service providers to have remote access to your system
- Always have a backstop (such as a list of treated cows on a whiteboard in the dairy) in case the system goes down



### Training in how to use

- Organise an introductory training session for the farm team on how to use key functions
- After using for 6 months, dedicate time to learning how to interpret and (better) use the various outputs
- After using for 12 months, review how you can further customise the system to meet your farm needs



### Ongoing oversight

- Have someone take overall responsibility for managing the system and the data quality
- Download and install any program upgrades as soon as they become available to keep the system current, secure and operating smoothly
- Have good IT practices in place:
  - Keep the operating system up-to-date (install updates)
  - Ensure regular back ups (likely to be part of the subscription if using a cloud-based service)
  - Run current anti-virus software

Visit [NSW Department of Primary Industries](#) for:

- [Videos on cow management technologies](#)
- [TechMatrix list of Herd Management Software available in Australia.](#)



In 2018, 79% of dairy farms in NSW had herd management software.

TechKISS is a New South Wales Dairy Industry Fund project delivered by the Harris Park Group. Project information is generic and is offered on an 'as is' basis with no guarantees of completeness or accuracy. Please seek advice before acting.