Keeping records on how you manage your dairy operation forms a key part of the Canadian Quality Milk (CQM) program. However, it doesn't have to be complicated. Sometimes the process can be as simple as jotting down a note on a calendar. You can also use the yellow CQM binder with templates for all the records you’ll need. Dairy Farmers of Ontario (DFO) is providing a copy to every licensed producer. Another option is the DHI log book, supplemented with some of the CQM templates. As well, five dairy management software programs* are CQM-approved, and can provide most required records.

* CQM-Approved Software
  - Dairy Comp Scout / 305 program with the Canadian Quality Milk module, released with the January 2007 annual update: www.canwestdhi.com/dc305.htm
  - DairyPlan C21 version 5.240 with the new 5.240 Canadian language file: www.westfalia.com
  - QMS Informatics: www.QMSInformatics.ca
  - SigaDairy Farm Software: www.siga.net
  - VAMPP: www.vampp.com

Record-keeping on your farm can be broken down into four basic areas. Some procedures need to be done only once, while others have to be updated yearly, monthly or daily. Let’s take a closer look at these four areas, and the available record-keeping options:

**Records needed only once**

*Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).* After written SOPs for your farm have been validated, DFO will store them in electronic form on DFO’s SOP Wizard. They need to be updated only if you change a procedure on your farm. This can be done easily through the SOP Wizard accessed through DFO’s website.

  Record-keeping options:
  - DFO SOP Wizard, or
  - keep manual records and pay your CQM trainer to input them into the SOP Wizard

*Corrective Action Plans (CAPs).* CAPs contain detailed instructions on how to fix or follow up on specific problems, such as your milk not cooling properly, or a treated cow being accidentally milked. You need to update them only if the procedure changes on your farm.

  Record-keeping options:
  - CAP templates in the yellow CQM binder
  - adding detailed instructions to the list of emergency contacts posted near the barn telephone, or
  - CQM-approved software

*Animal Health Drug Inventory List.* This list shows every drug or chemical used to care for your herd. Update it when you add or replace a product in your inventory.

  Record-keeping options:
  - check-box inventory template in the yellow CQM binder
  - your choice of manual recording system, or
  - CQM-approved software
Treated Feed Storage. You have to clearly identify feed bins or other containers where you store treated feed to prevent it from being fed to the wrong animals.

Record-keeping options:
- provide feeding instructions in treated feed SOP

Animal Identification. Identify all cattle on your farm according to the National Livestock Identification (NLID) program.

Records updated yearly

Milk System Wash Analysis. Have your milking equipment dealer or industry professional do a wash analysis, and adjust the wash system or chemical levels to ensure proper wash function. This will help keep your milking system clean and prevent high bacteria counts in your milk.

Record-keeping options:
- Dealer fills in wash analysis report, or
- Dealer fills in wash analysis evaluation template in the yellow CQM binder

Milkhouse Water Test. The water you use for milking system sanitation and cleaning has to be tested to ensure it meets provincial requirements.

Record-keeping options:
- Your choice of record-keeping system, or
- CQM-approved software

Veterinary Prescriptions. You can ask your veterinarian to write an annual treatment protocol to cover routine off-label drug applications. This will reduce the number of individual prescriptions you need from your vet for off-label treatments.

Record-keeping options:
- sample veterinary prescription template in the yellow CQM binder, or
- CQM-approved software

Records updated monthly

Equipment Sanitation Inspection. Inspect and record the cleanliness of milking equipment at least monthly—weekly is even better—to ensure milk contact points are kept clean, eg. bulk tank interior, milking claws, receiver jar and pipeline inlets.

Record-keeping options:
- sanitation record template in the yellow CQM binder
- your choice of manual recording system, or
- CQM-approved software

Records updated daily

Record of Correction Actions. If something goes wrong, record the action you took to correct it, such as a hot water tank malfunction.

Record-keeping options:
- a simple system such as writing down the action taken in a notebook or on a calendar
- corrective actions template in the yellow CQM binder, or
- CQM-approved software

Animal Treatments. Record all instances of administering medications to animals in your herd.

Record-keeping options:
- livestock treatment record template in the yellow CQM binder
- DHI log book
- generic farm log book, or
- CQM-approved software

For more information about the national CQM program, please visit DFO’s website, www.milk.org, and click on the CQM link, or contact your DFO Field Services Representative.