

Dairy Cow Mortality

Main Investigators:

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Introduction:

Research has shown that adult dairy cow mortality rates have been increasing over the past two decades. One survey showed a mortality rate of 1.8% in 1988 whereas more recent surveys done through the USDA have shown the rates to be 4.8%. DHI reports even higher rates in the west ranging from 4 to 12%. Until this area is further looked into we can only speculate at why there is an increase in mortality rates. There could be a new disease in dairy cattle, genetic, nutritional, environmental or managerial factors that lead to this increase.

Current Research Endeavors:

Adult dairy cow mortalities were followed for one year starting on March 1, 2005 and ending February 28, 2006 on a 1400 cow Colorado dairy. All dead cows were necropsied either on the farm or at the Colorado State Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory. Production and health records were evaluated for all dead cows. Over the year long period 91 cows died of which 81 were necropsied. The largest percentage of animals died from musculoskeletal injury, digestive disorders, and uterine disorders.;

Blood from all cows that freshened over the study period was collected and stored for future analysis.; Serum chemistry panels were ran on 10 of the cows that died within 10 days in milk and 10 control cows matched for lactation and fresh date.; Enzymes related to muscle damage were significantly higher in the dead cows than in the cows that survived at least 100 days after freshening. Expected date of completion; 2006.

Publications:

Related abstracts:

Descriptive Epidemiology of Adult Dairy Cow Mortalities

JA. Severidt, FB. Garry, DH.Gould, JR. Wenz, JE. Lombard

Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO, USA (submitted for 2006 meeting and accepted)

Descriptive Epidemiology of Adult Dairy Cow Mortalities on a Modern Colorado Dairy

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