



349 Research report

Extended lactation of dairy cows

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2012 V-focus : 35-37

In Significant Impact Groups:

AMU reduction strategies \

Species targeted: Dairy;

Age: Adult;

Summary:

Extended lactation has been shown successful in goat and sheep. The aim of this paper was to investigate to what extent dairy cows can benefit from extended lactations also. Extended lactation reduces the number of calvings. Most of the health problems are observed around calving (end of the dry period up to 6 weeks after parturition) and therefore extended lactations can improve animal health and welfare and improve job satisfaction for the farmer. Based on a dataset of 116 organic dairy farms, calculations were made to find out to what extent the total milk production per cow was affected by the lower daily milk production and the overall shorter dry period at extended lactations. Extended lactations were defined as lactations of 500 days or more. About 6% of the lactations on a farm were classified as extended, although this varied among farms. According to the authors the lowered daily milk production was covered by the increased number of milking days and overall shorter dry period. Theoretically, the overall milk production could even be higher than total milk production collected at mean lactations of 345 days (which was the average lactation length of the farms). However good food quality, good management and healthy animals are needed to make extended lactation successful.

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Where to find the original material:

<https://www.louisbolk.org/downloads/2544.pdf>;

Country: NL