



496 Research paper

### **French dairy cows' dry period: state of play 2015-2017**

by Roussel, D. Ballot, N., Gautier, P., Bore, R. and J. Jurquet  
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#### **In Significant Impact Groups:**

Prudent use AB \ Farmer Pathogen management

Species targeted: Dairy;

Age: Adult;

#### **Summary:**

This study deals with the dry period of dairy cows. Its objective is to describe the current practices of French dairy farmer and to identify their needs as well as those of advisers in terms of technical advice on this phase of production cycle. It is based on an analysis of the national database of 2,914,921 dry cows from 2015 to 2017 and on two surveys. The first one, online, was conducted among 130 advisors from the main French dairy regions (73,8% advisers, 17,5% team supervisors and 8,7% veterinarians). The second, on farm, involved 79 farmers in Western and Eastern France. From 2015 to 2017, the median duration of the dry period was 63 days. The median milk production before drying off amounts to 16.9 kg / d with 9% of the cows over 25 kg / d. Epidemiological data show that the average new infection index in 2017 is 12% and the recovery index is 77%. But there are strong differences in results between farms which seem more linked to a herd effect than to individual effects (milk production/ cell count / drying period / ...). Drying off and dry period practices are very diverse: five major treatment protocols to dry off are used. In addition, 78% of farmers use an antibiotic for drying off and 50% practice selective treatment. Similarly, 138 feeding programs are used, i.e. 1.7 per farm on average. Udder infections and milk fevers are the 2 main peripartum problems cited by 72% and 54% of farmers, respectively. The concerns of advisors relate primarily to: (i) feeding management (21%), treatment strategy (20%) and the decrease in milk production (19%) before drying off, (ii) on dry-off protocols (47%) on the day of dry-off and (iii) on feeding and preparation for calving (39%) Farmers express similar themes. However, the nature of the information requested differs between farmers and advisors: farmers request more protocols whereas advisors ask for more basis of understanding.

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#### **Where to find the original material:**

[http://www.journees3r.fr/spip.php?article4725;](http://www.journees3r.fr/spip.php?article4725)

Country: FR