MONITORING LAMENESS IN A DAIRY COWS FARM

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Abstract

Lameness has an important impact on milk production, welfare and farm profitability. Monitoring cattle was done in a farm A with 1000 Holstein from Bacău County, in the east of Romania. The indices used to evaluate the herd lameness were: incidence rate of lameness for treated cases, recurrence rate of lameness for treated cases, lameness index, monthly incidence rate and monthly recovery rate of lameness. Data collected from each lame cow included its unique identification, a locomotion (mobility) score, the identity of the lame leg(s) and any other pertinent information. We were focused on four most common lesions associated with lameness: sole ulcers, white line disease, digital dermatitis and interdigital necrobacillosis. In the farm A, percentage of lame cow with score 2 was 25, and the percentage of severely lame (score 3) was 5, much higher comparing to the targets. All other lameness indices were much higher comparing to the targets of a normal farm, which may explain the fertility problems and a decreased milk production during the last 2 years. Once lame cows have been identified, they should be examined, diagnosed and treated as soon as possible. A combination of early detection and effective treatment may have a number of benefits to the cow, herd and farm.

Key word: lameness, locomotion score, foot-trimming, dairy cows