UDDER HEALTH AND COMMUNICATION
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AND COMMUNICATION

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Preface

Mastitis probably is the most studied disease in the dairy industry. That is for obvious reasons. Mastitis has an effect on welfare, on milk quality, it disturbs working routines and it is an important reason for culling. Additionally, most antibiotics in dairy cattle are used in the udder.

We live in a dynamic world. The dairy industry is quickly changing with all over the world decreasing numbers of herds with rapidly increasing numbers of cows per herd. At the same time, in the rich part of the world, society is demanding. Animal welfare is becoming more important, as are requirements on safety, taste and price. These changes lead to technical innovations such as automatic milking systems that may have consequences on the health of the most important organ of the dairy cow: the udder.

The importance of continuous research is beyond doubt. Research leads to increased knowledge. Knowledge comes to value if it is used. Over the years we have learned that in order for knowledge to be applied, communication is as important as the technical content of the message. We need to have our technical knowledge up to standards and there is a continuous need to optimize that. At the same time we need to motivate farmers, veterinarians and other workers in the field to adopt new technologies and to optimize management. This requires knowledge about the (economic) effect of new technologies and improved management on udder health, but this also requires optimal communication.

In the changing dairy industry, not only the farms changed, the farmers also changed. Today’s dairy farmer is not quite comparable to the dairy farmer of ten or twenty years ago. We can wonder whether advisers changed as quick as farmers did. And we can wonder whether we know enough about communication, about mindset and motivation to optimally serve that dairy farmer. From October 25-27 2011 a conference on this topic was held. It aimed at science that is useful for practice, in all its meanings. This book covers the proceedings of the material that is presented and discussed during the International Conference on Udder Health and Communication and consists of papers of keynote and other oral presentations and abstracts of all poster presentations.

We are happy that so many people show interest in this subject. On behalf of the organizing committee we are happy to invite you to use these proceedings to the best to further improve udder health. Finally, we would like to acknowledge all the people that made this conference and the publication of these proceedings possible: the authors, the scientific committee and the editors of Wageningen Academic Publishers.

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Table of contents

Preface 7

Keynotes

National mastitis control schemes: experiences from implementation of a nationwide scheme in Great Britain 21
*M.J. Green, J.E. Breen, C. Hudson, H. Black, K. Cross and A.J. Bradley*

Countdown Downunder: development led innovation in a national mastitis control program 33
*J.F. Penry*

The role of economics in motivating farmers to improve udder health 43
*A.W. Stott*

Effective communication to improve udder health: can social science help? 55
*C.J. Garforth*

Part 1. Udder health programs and campaigns

Effects of health and welfare planning on the use of antibiotics and udder health in European dairy farms 69

The Danish udder health campaign: our milk – a pure pleasure 77
*J. Katholm and T.W. Bennedsgaard*

‘DEMO project udder health’: a first step towards a better udder health and milk quality in Flanders (Belgium) 85
*S. Piepers, K. Lommelen, J. De Meulemeester and S. De Vliegher*

Improvement of udder health following implementation of herd health plans in organic dairy farms: results of a pilot study in Germany 91
*S. March, J. Brinkmann and C. Winckler*
The effect of a national control program on mastitis occurrence in the Netherlands
B.H.P. van den Borne, T.J.G.M. Lam, O.C. Sampimon, J. Jansen and G. van Schaik

€uroMilk mastitis control programme – a pilot study
F. Mc Coy and C. Devitt

CellCheck—a national initiative
F. Mc Coy and J. O’Flaherty

Preventive animal health concepts in organic dairy farming: results of an interdisciplinary intervention study on mastitis and metabolic disorders in Germany

Online mastitis survey in Flanders, Belgium: first descriptive results
P. Passchyn, S. Piepers and S. De Vliegher

Part 2. New approaches in mastitis control

Bulk milk quality: can it be improved by dairy farm audits?
A.G.J. Velthuis, A. Flores-Miyamoto and M.W. Reij

Internet data services from maritime quality milk: tools for tracking milk quality
G.P. Keefe

Systems analysis of high somatic cell counts on dairy farms
Y.H. Schukken, C. Gutierrez, F.L. Welcome and Y.T. Grohn

Part 3. Motivation and communication strategies

A Bayesian approach demonstrating that incorporation of practitioners’ clinical beliefs into research design is crucial for effective knowledge transfer
H.M. Higgins, I.L. Dryden and M.J. Green

Enhancing udder health with clinical communication skills: evidence based communication frameworks for the 22 century
C.L. Adams and J.J. Coe
Udder health management improvement: Insights from agent-based modelling  
*N.I. Valeeva and T. Verwaart*

Usage of milking gloves and teat sealer on German dairy farms  
*C. Fischer-Tenhagen, S. Bertulat, M. Grau and W. Heuwieser*

Communication research from other healthcare disciplines and its application to udder-health management  
*J.B. Coe and C.L. Adams*

Attitudes with regard to animal management of farmers with an automatic milking system and their relationship with udder health  
*H. Hogeveen, W. Dohmen, R.J. Renes and T.J.G.M. Lam*

Farmer-veterinarian communication in the new Danish herd health program: changing responsibilities in relation to mastitis treatment and udder health promotion  
*M. Vaarst and I.C. Klaas*

Dairy farmers’ knowledge, attitude and behaviour towards udder health in Switzerland  
*B.H.P. van den Borne, P. Gordon, A.M. Lokhorst, S. Menéndez González, M.E. Cousin, S. Kohler, M.G. Doherr and M. Reist*

Impact of communication strategies for milkers on udder health program  
*E. Izak, E. Castello and G. Veneranda*

**Part 4. The effective advisor**

Potentials and limitations of systematic clinical examinations in farmer-veterinarian collaboration for improved udder health in the new Danish herd health program  
*I.C. Klaas, M. Vaarst, M. Trinderup, H.L. Martin and C.O. Paulrud*

Veterinary on-farm counselling on dairy farms: the veterinarians’ vision  
*M. Derks, T. van Werven W.D.J. Kremer and H. Hogeveen*

Organizing external communication in the veterinary practice  
*J.L. Kleen, O. Atkinson and J.P.T.M. Noordhuizen*

Presenting uncertainty and variability to the decision maker: A computer program that uses Monte Carlo simulations to improve the management of the dry period  
*A. Madouasse, J.N. Huxley, B.H.P. Van Den Borne, F. Toni and M.J. Green*
Dairy farmer and the veterinarian: an issue of communication  
*P. Håkansson, Y. Persson and R. Båge*

**Part 5. Training to improve udder health**

Bilingual trainings for milkers in New York State: a success for quality milk  
*C. Gutierrez-Solano, A. Ceballos-Marquez and Y.H. Schukken*

A coordinated udder health training strategy in Quebec, Canada  
*H. Poirier, J. Durocher, R. Lacroix, J. Carrier and D.T. Scholl*

Focus courses  
*H. Landin, Y. Persson and J. Waldner*

**Part 6. Economics**

*Ex-ante* assessment of profitability of a new control plan for mastitis as a motivation tool for dairy farmers  
*N. Bareille, P. Roussel, F. Sereys, B. Frappat and H. Seegers*

Costs and benefits of mastitis management measures on individual dairy farms  

Estimating the impact of mastitis on the profitability of Irish dairy farms  
*U. Geary, N. Begley, F. McCoy, B. O’Brien, L. O’Grady and L. Shallow*

The effect of udder health on cow fertility: understanding the costs  
*C.D. Hudson, A.J. Bradley, J.E. Breen and M.J. Green*

A partial budget analysis to estimate the economics of a mastitis vaccination program  
*A. Lago, R. Guix, R. March, M. Noguera, A. Foix and T. Prenafeta*

Determination of economic loss from depressed udder health  
*M. Behr*
Part 7. Mastitis diagnostics

Characterization of MRSA from bulk tank milk of dairy herds using a commercial microarray

*K. Kreausukon, A. Fetsch, B. Kraushaar, K. Alt, K. Müller, V. Krömker, K.-H. Zessin, and B.-A. Tenhagen*

Mastitis diagnostics: qPCR for *Staphylococcus aureus* genotype B in bulk tank milk

*H.U. Graber and R. Boss*

Identification of coagulase-negative *Staphylococcus* species by gas chromatography


Real time PCR values for mastitis pathogens – relations to milk quality and herd characteristics in Danish dairy herds

*T.W. Bennedsgaard and J. Katholm*

The use of strain typing as an on farm tool to highlight particular points of interest in the control of *Staphylococcus aureus* mastitis

*D.G.J. Prins, A. Smith, D.C. Barrett and K.A. Ellis*

Estimation of the diagnostic accuracy of a multiplex real-time PCR assay and bacteriological culture for four bovine intramammary pathogens


Part 8. Treatment

Promoting judicious antibiotic use: On-farm culture-based treatment strategies

*K. MacDonald, G. Keefe, I. Dohoo, K. Leslie and J.P. Roy*

Efficacy of the selective treatment of clinical mastitis based on on-farm culture results

*A. Lago, S.M. Godden, R. Bey, P.L. Ruegg and K. Leslie*

Field study on acute mastitis with SIRS and different treatment regimes

*L. Podstatzky, H. Hofrichter; C. Schleicher and P. Winter*

Efficacy of two fresh cow subclinical mastitis treatment programs

*A. Lago, S. Godden, R. Bey, K. Leslie and P. Ruegg*
Effect of the combination of Tylan 200® & Penicillin G in the treatment of mastitis caused by *Staphylococcus aureus* and/or *Streptococcus uberis*

*S. Simjee, J. Amedeo, A.M. Barletta and A. Pridmore*

Use of Tylan 200® for the treatment of mastitis caused by *Staphylococcus aureus* and/or *Streptococcus uberis*

*S. Simjee, J. Amedeo and A.M. Barletta*

Therapeutic effects of lactation treatment of bovine subclinical *Staphylococcus aureus* mastitis with penicillin

*A.T. Duse, M. Albrechtsen, T.W. Bennedsgaard and I.C. Klaas*

*In vitro* activity profile of a kanamycin and cefalexin combination against coagulase-negative staphylococci and correlation between MIC and disk zone sizes

*C. Pillar and L. Goby*

---

**Part 9. Treatment evaluation**

Monitoring treatment outcomes: understanding and managing expectations

*A.J. Bradley, J.E. Breen, C.D. Hudson and M.J. Green*

Use of in-line measurements of somatic cell count to evaluate treatment efficacy of subclinical bovine *Staphylococcus aureus* mastitis

*M. Albrechtsen, A.T. Duse, T.W. Bennedsgaard and I.C. Klaas*

‘Therapy evaluation’: a useful tool for practitioners

*K. Huijps, J. de Hoog and J. van Hoorne*

Dynamics of udder infection and effect of dry cow therapy validated by test day samples

*T.W. Bennedsgaard and J. Katholm*

---

**Part 10. Infectious pressure**

Subclinical mastitis in Dutch dairy heifers in early lactation and associated risk factors

*I.M.G.A. Santman-Berends, O.C. Sampimon, R.G.M. Olde Riekerink, G. van Schaik and T.J.G.M. Lam*

Risk factors associated with bacteriological quality of bulk tank milk in the Netherlands

*R.G.M. Olde Riekerink, S. Jansen Venneboer, J.D. Miltenburg and T.J.G.M. Lam*
The efficacy of two iodine teat dips based on naturally occurring new intramammary infections
A. Ceballos-Marquez, B.J. Rauch, M. Lopez-Benavides, T. Hemling and Y.H. Schukken

Manageable risk factors associated with incidence and elimination of Staphylococcus aureus intramammary infections
S. Dufour, I. Dohoo and D. Scholl

Factors influencing average herd somatic cell count in France in 2005 and 2006
D. Raboisson, E. Cahuzac, P. Sans and G. Allaire

Risk factors associated with intramammary infections caused by the more pathogenic CNS-species
A. De Visscher, F. Haesebrouck, K. Supré, S. Piepers and S. De Vliegher

Management of udder-thigh dermatitis on dairy cattle: epidemiological and bacteriological data
C. Roy, J.L. Roque, P.M. Francois, A. Ferrieres and D. Raboisson

Survey of bulk tank milk from all Danish dairy herds in 2009 and 2010 with real-time PCR
J. Katholm and T. Bennedsgaard

Bedding conditioners for reduction of infectious pressure by mastitis pathogens – does their use make sense?
S. Ruebcke, A. Haeussermann, E. Hartung and K. Knappstein

Epidemiological and microbiological characteristics of Streptococcus uberis as mastitis pathogen in Swiss dairy herds
U.K. Berger, C. Haldemann and W. Schaeren

Part 11. Host resistance

Immunological response to an experimental intramammary inoculation with a killed Staphylococcus aureus strain in vaccinated and non-vaccinated lactating dairy cows
Feasibility of high immune response (HIR) technology as a health management tool to characterize immune response profiles of dairy cattle 359
L. Wagter-Lesperance, S. Cartwright, T. Funk, D. Kelton, F. Miglior and B. Mallard

Polymorphism screening and association study of CXCR1 with udder health in dairy heifers 367
J. Verbeke, S. Piepers, L. Peelman, M. Van Poucke and S. De Vliegher

Genomic regions associated with somatic cell score in dairy cattle 373
S. Wijga, J.W.M. Bastiaansen, E. Wall, E. Strandberg, Y. de Haas, L. Giblin, and H. Bovenhuis

Efficacy of a Staphylococcus aureus biofilm-embedded bacterin against coagulase-negative staphylococci intramammary infections in dairy cows 381
M. Noguera, O. Franquesa, D. Herrera, C. Cifuentes, R. Guix, T. Prenafeta and R. March

Effect of introducing OrbeSeal into a dry cow management programme and the impact on farm economics 382

Part 12. Milking machine and milking technique

Udder health in herds with automatic milking 385
H. Landin, M. Mörk and G. Pettersson

Alert preferences of dairy farmers working with automatic milking systems 391
L.J. Rijkaart, H. Mollenhorst and H. Hogeveen

The role of sensor measurements in treating mastitis on farms with an automatic milking system 399
W. Steeneveld, C. Kamphuis, H. Mollenhorst, T. van Werven and H. Hogeveen

Influence of milk yield and take-off settings on milking parlour performance and udder health 407
R. Ginsberg

Bacterial migration through teat canal related to liner action 415
D. Forbes and W. Gehm
Classification of mouthpiece chamber vacuum records in milking-time tests 416
O. Ronningen

Key messages for an efficient udder preparation routine 417
X. Goossens, M. Gentilini, M.G. Lopez-Benavides and T.C. Hemling

Effects of material, shape and mouthpiece venting on liner performance 418
S.A.G. Gomez, D.J.R. Reinemann and P.D.T. Thompson

Wearing gloves for milking in Western New York: To wear or not to wear? 419
A. Ceballos-Marquez, C. Gutierrez-Solano and Y.H. Schukken

New technology for vacuum-logging during milking helps advisor 420
E. Postma

The world of post milking teat disinfectants: features, uses and risks 421
T.C. Hemling, M.G. Lopez-Benavides and X. Goossens

Index

Authors 425