

CONSTRUINDO SABERES, FORMANDO PESSOAS E TRANSFORMANDO A PRODUÇÃO ANIMAL

CHARACTERISATION OF CALVES REARING SYSTEMS IN FAMILY OWNED DAIRY FARMS IN PRESIDENTE OLEGÁRIO - MINAS GERAIS

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The dairy farming in recent years has undergone great advances. However, despite this development, calf rearing is still a critical phase with great risks and high animal mortality. The success of this phase depends on an adequate breeding system, with adequate feeding and management associated with the reduction of production costs since the birth. The objective of this study was to characterize family-owned dairy farms regarding aspects related to the rearing of calves. The data came from twelve farms, located in the Northwest region of Minas Gerais, in the municipality of Presidente Olegário; in the period between May and June 2016. The data were recorded in Sphinx® software spreadsheets and the answers were grouped by means of their categorization and frequency. The data evidenced that several failures in the management of the calves during the rearing phase start in the care of pre-calving cows and extend until the weaning of the calves, and this combination of failures should affect the efficiency of the business. No property owned colostrum stock. The main forrage source of the calves during the raining season was pasture (75% of the farms). In the dry season, maize silage was the most used (58% of the farms). Most (75%) of the properties offered concentrated ration for the animals all year round, although only 17% of properties offered specific ration for calves. Only 58% of properties provided some mineral supplementation for the calves. In 83% of the properties, facilities are inadequate or poorly located and the farmers raise calves in collective paddocks and do not use criteria for grouping, jointly managing males and females of various ages and thus impairing their individual performance. There is no adoption of a specific health protocol for calves and the lack of basic prophylactic care exposes animals to a higher incidence of diseases and diverts the focus of health care to the treatment of sick animals rather than the prevention of the diseases. In all the properties the navel cure was made; however, in 92% of them it was done only once a day and, also in the majority, only in a single day. Feeding is done without criteria in most of the properties, which may be contributing to the increase in occurrence of several reported sanitary problems. The possibilities of technical and economic feasibility for family farming become smaller in view of the limitations observed in the rearing phase.

Keywords: calf breeding; dairy business; replacement females

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