



Associations between grazing management and on-farm mortality in Swedish dairy herds

Aim

Investigate differences in grazing management between herds with high on-farm mortality and herds with low on-farm mortality

Conclusion

More access to pasture is associated with lower mortality rates

Material and methods

Herds with over 35 cows were categorised into high or low mortality herds based on their mortality rates for three consecutive years:

Year	High mortality herds	Low mortality herds
2010/2011	>7.7 (>Q3) ¹	<2.7 (<Q1)
2009/2010	>8.1 (>Q3)	<2.7 (<Q1)
2008/2009	>5.2 (>Q2)	<5.2 (<Q2)

¹Deaths/100 cow-years (quartile)

A postal questionnaire was sent to 194 high mortality herds and to 250 low mortality herds in October 2012.

Results

We received 145 questionnaires usable for analysis (response rate 35%). Differences between high mortality herds and low mortality herds were analysed using Pearson's χ^2 test.

Variable	High mortality herds	Low mortality herds	P
Use of production pasture	15 (27%)	54 (67%)	<.001
Stocking density <5.8 cows/ha	17 (34%)	41 (61%)	<.05
Access to pasture >15h/day	19 (35%)	52 (62%)	<.01
Access to pasture during day and night	16 (28%)	47 (55%)	<.01
Open doors between barn and pasture	34 (60%)	28 (34%)	<.01

Production pasture = part of the cow's energy requirement is covered from grazing

