

Farmers' perceptions of participation in a health recording study

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Introduction

- Validation study of the Swedish dairy health recording system
- Farmer recordings compared to database recordings
- Farmers' experiences from participating?

Material and method

- Farmers recorded all clinical diseases in dairy cows during two 2-month periods 2008
- A one-page, pre-printed, recording sheet with the diseases and clinical signs
- Written instructions and a telephone call before each study period
- Monthly reminders during the first data collection period, and every second week during the second period
- After the study a letter of thanks including a short questionnaire concerning herd management and perception of study participation
- Differences in responses were tested by herd size, employees at the farm or not, and willingness to participate in a future attitude study
- Differences in answers tested by Wilcoxon rank sum test (two-sided, $p < 0.05$ statistically significant)

Results

- Response rate 110 of 128
- Farmers with employees perceived the information given during the study as less good ($p = 0.04$)
- Farms with an average herd size below the median (41.5 cows) were more satisfied with the information given before ($p = 0.04$) and during the study ($p = 0.01$)
- Farmers not willing to participate in an attitude study considered the study importance as lower ($p = 0.05$)

Conclusion

Overall, farmers were very satisfied with the information and instructions given and their own performance. Further research is needed to investigate why herds with employees and herd size above the median were less positive and to find an approach that would suit them better.

