LOCOMOTION SCORE OF COWS AS A STRATEGY FOR THE CONTROL AND PREVENTION OF LAMENESS

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Introduction: The allocation of locomotion scoring (LS) is a tremendous tool in the prevention and control programs of LAMENESS. The LS permits to diagnose the total number of lame cows in the herds, including the subacute lame cows, so farmers could define the goals and objectives to tackle the problem.

Objective: Implement the allocation of locomotion score with a scale of 1, 2 or 3 to stratify the herd according to their locomotion.

Material and methods: A group of 255 lactating cows from one herd in the X region of Chile were observed during November of 2009 on the way out of the milking parlor. These cows were classified according to their locomotion score as 1, 2 or 3 (1 = normal, 2 = abnormal movement with arched back, 3 = abnormal movement with evident limb pain and LAMENESS). The idea was to use a simplified scale to incorporate a monthly LS and collect periodical information to determinate the most critical periods for LAMENESS. LS Data were entered to EXCEL 2007 and compared between farmers.

Results: The 68% of the 255 cows presented a LS grade 1. The 23% had a LS grade 2 and 9% presented evidence of any extremity claudication (Grade 3).

Conclusion: The allocation of locomotion scoring gives relevant information about evident and subacute lame cows, so it could be possible to prioritize the evaluation of LS grade 3 cows and then examine the LS grade 2 cows. The 9% of grade 3 cows is similar to the prevalence described in recent works carried out in Chile that corresponds on many occasions to the information obtained for the farmer, which represents the top of the iceberg. Finally, The LS is a tool that Farmers could do and record periodically, so they could estimate periodical incidences and determine which are the most critical periods for LAMENESS and be prepared to control and prevent this issue.

Keywords: Locomotion scoring, LAMENESS.