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EFFECT OF LITTER QUALITY ON LYING TIMES

The most influential factor on lying times is area specifications.

Cows definitely prefer well littered over deep-litter cubicles with less litter and lie in them longer.

Insufficient lying comfort results in a higher risk of claw diseases.

Practical experiences and scientific research prove that only providing deep-litter cubicles for cows is not sufficient, but that the maintenance level is decisive for system quality.

Objective of this study:

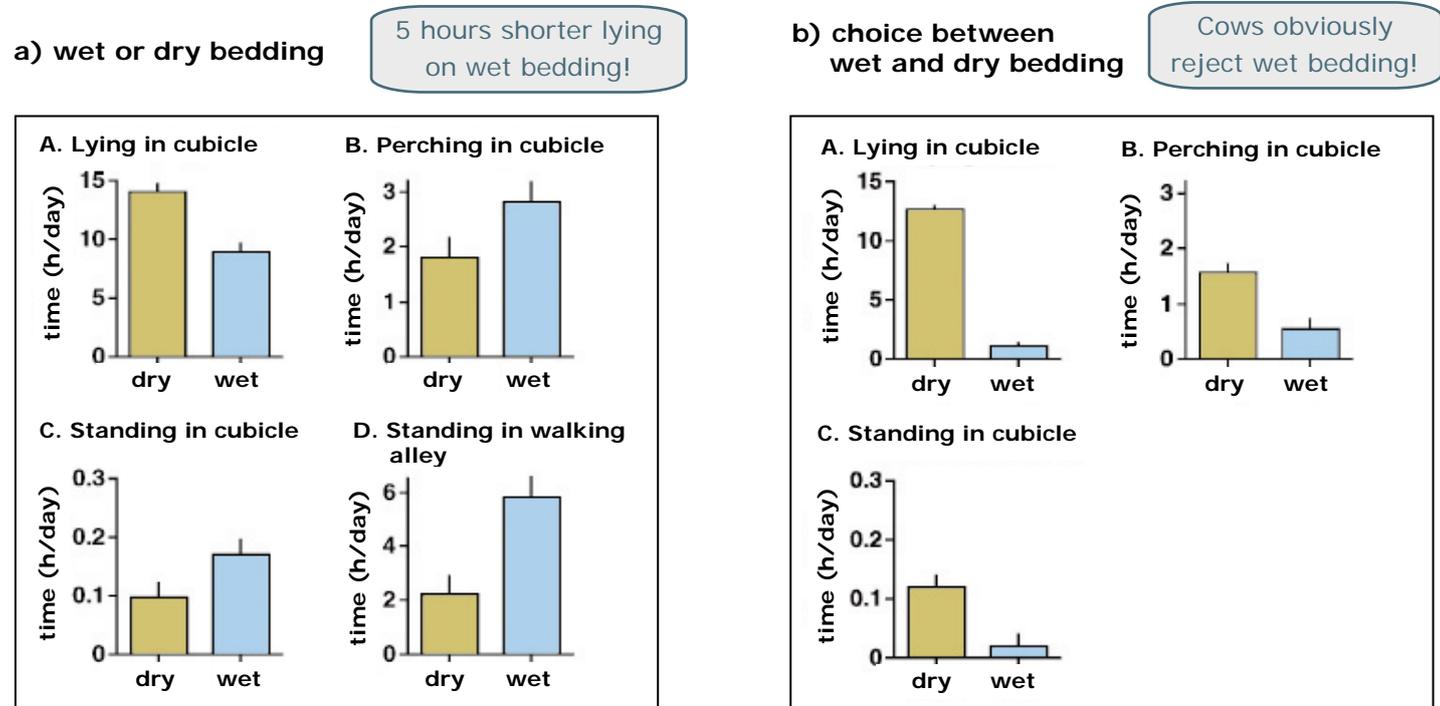
An accepted fact is that lying times in deep-litter cubicles decline significantly in direct proportion to the decrease in bedding thickness. The goal of this study was to determine to what extent the moisture content of the litter affects cow behaviour (preferences, lying and standing behaviour).

Procedure:

The experiment was carried out in January and February 2007 in a naturally ventilated cow house at British Columbia University. 24 non-lactating cows were divided into 4 groups. In the cubicles there was a textile mattress with 10 cm of soft wood sawdust (about 7.5 kg/cubicle). The walking areas were covered with rubber. The experiment started after a 5 day adaptation period, and the cows had:

- a) cubicles with dry sawdust (86.4 ± 2.1% DM) in the beginning and afterwards cubicles with wet sawdust (26.5 ± 2.1% DM),
- b) after this experimental period they could freely choose between either of the two types.

Results:



Conclusions:
Cows show a clear preference for dry lying surfaces and they spend much more time outside the cubicles, if only a wet lying area is available.

Source: Fregonesi et al., 2007: Effects of Bedding Quality on Lying Behavior of Dairy Cows. J. Dairy Sci. Vol 90 N°12: 5468–5472