Journal of Dairy Science® presents collection on calf health and management

Six new USDA studies in the October issue of JDS focus on preweaned heifer calves

Philadelphia, September 20, 2018 – The United States Department of Agriculture-National Animal Health Monitoring System (USDA-NAHMS) conducted a survey of 2,545 preweaned heifer calves across 104 dairy operations in 2014. The study, which took place in 13 states over 18 months, covered a large cross-section of management of preweaned heifer calves in the United States, and the results have been published in six new articles in the October issue of the *Journal of Dairy Science*.

"Results from the study contain the latest information on the health and management of preweaned heifer calves in the United States. The information in these publications will help to improve the health and well-being of preweaned dairy heifer calves," said Jason Lombard, DVM, of USDA-Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service-(APHIS)-Veterinary Services (VS) Center for Epidemiology and Animal Health, NAHMS, Fort Collins, CO, USA.

Management of preweaned dairy calves is complex, and many factors play a role in the success of practices at the farm level. Rearing heifer calves is also an expensive endeavor, at approximately $5.50 per calf per day. Therefore, research to maximize the efficiency of raising replacement heifers and minimize losses due to morbidity and mortality is extremely important. Because the industry is continually changing, however, having current information on management practices throughout the United States is a necessity. As such, these six studies from the USDA-NAHMS represent an important collection to reflect the current state of the dairy industry.

The articles included in the October issue of the *Journal of Dairy Science* include survey results on descriptive characteristics of preweaned heifer raising practices, colostrum quality and passive transfer status, *Cryptosporidium* and *Giardia* infections, the presence of *Escherichia coli*, morbidity and mortality, as well as average daily gain. These studies provide dairy producers with a wealth of information to help them improve their calf-rearing practices in terms of outcomes and efficiency. The authors hope that the results may also be used to guide education programs and improve overall calf health.

Notes for Editors
The articles are "Preweaned heifer management on US dairy operations: Part I. Descriptive characteristics of preweaned heifer characteristics" (https://doi.org/10.3168/jds.2017-14010); "Part II. Factors associated with colostrum quality and passive transfer status of dairy heifer calves" (https://doi.org/10.3168/jds.2017-14008); "Part III. Factors associated with *Cryptosporidium* and *Giardia* in preweaned dairy heifer calves" (https://doi.org/10.3168/jds.2017-14060); "Part IV. Factors associated with the presence of *Escherichia coli* O157 in preweaned dairy heifers" (https://doi.org/10.3168/jds.2018-14659); "Part V. Factors associated with morbidity and mortality in preweaned dairy heifer calves" (https://doi.org/10.3168/jds.2017-14019); and "Part VI. Factors associated with average daily gain in preweaned dairy heifer calves" (https://doi.org/10.3168/jds.2017-14022). They will appear in the *Journal of Dairy Science*, volume 101, issue 10 (October 2018) published by FASS Inc. and Elsevier. These articles are openly available from September 20 – October 20, 2018 at the links above.

Full text of these articles is available to credentialed journalists upon request. Contact Eileen Leahy at +1 732 238 3628 or jdsmedia@elsevier.com to obtain copies. Journalists wishing to interview the authors should contact Jason Lombard, DVM, at the National Animal Health Monitoring System at Jason.E.Lombard@aphis.usda.gov.

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