

# Survey on routines in udder health management and therapy of mastitis on German dairy farms

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## Abstract

The objective of this study was to gain information on udder health management and the use of antimicrobials in mastitis in dairy cows. The role of veterinarians in udder health management on dairy farms in Germany was a further focal point of this study. A total of 499 completed survey forms were returned by participating farms from nine federal states. Questionnaires revealed that the largest proportion of farms (32.1 %) were visited by their veterinarian on a weekly basis. The farm veterinarian was named most frequently as consultant for udder health (91.6%), followed by bovine health services (33.1%), agricultural consultants (27.5%) and other dairy professionals (20.0%). Fifty-eight percent of respondents had concise knowledge of parameters from the monthly udder health report submitted by the German Dairy Herd Improvement (DHI) organizations. Respondents from large farms (>500 cows) showed a significantly larger familiarity with udder health report contents than small farms (<100 cows) ( $p < 0.05$ ).

Clinical cases of mastitis were treated on all farms, although only 74.9% of participants reported immediate use of antimicrobials after diagnosis. Regular use of penicillin, other  $\beta$ -lactam-antimicrobials, macrolids and lincomycin was reported by 356 participants (78.4 %) with 363 participants (80%) reporting additional or sole use of fluorquinolones or 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> generation cephalosporines in mastitis therapy.

Our results show that the farm veterinarian plays an integral role in mastitis management on German farms. A heavier focus should be directed at utilizing available udder health data for development of preventive and treatment protocols.

*Key words: survey, mastitis treatment, antimicrobials, udder health management*