Changes in Feeding Behaviour Identifies Cows at Risk for Subclinical Ketosis


Problem: Subclinical ketosis (SCK) after calving is difficult to detect and little is known on how to identify cows at risk for postpartum SCK prior to calving

Objective: To determine if prepartum DMI can be used as a tool to identify cows at risk of developing SCK in the week after calving.

Methods:
• Daily TMR intake was recorded during the 3wk before and 3wk after calving
• Health and daily milk production were recorded for 3wk after calving
• SCK was defined as serum β-hydroxybutryate >1000µmol/L during the week immediately after calving
• 10 healthy cows were matched by parity with 10 cows with SCK in wk+1

Results:
• From wk-1 to wk+2 cows with SCK ate significantly less than healthy cows (P<0.01)
• Every 1kg decrease in DMI during wk-1 increased the odds of a cow getting SCK by 2.2 times (P_{Wald} = 0.02; CI_{95} = 1.11-4.31)

Conclusion: For high producing Holsteins, low DMI during the week before calving can identify cows at risk of developing subclinical ketosis during the week after calving.

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