

Comparison of maternal nursing performance of beef calves maintained in outdoor housing system

S u m m a r y

The studies comprised calves of 5 beef cattle breeds, i.e. Red Angus, Salers, Hereford, Limousine, and Simmental, managed under uniform housing conditions. Maternal calf rearing performance was evaluated through comparing body weight at birth and at weaning, daily gains from birth until weaning, as well as through an analysis of rates of calving difficulties and mortality of calves. It has been found that Simmental bull calves and heifers had the largest body weight and the best daily gains if reared outdoors. Very good results were also achieved by Hereford bull calves and Salers heifers. The poorest performance, as compared to the other breeds, was achieved by Red Angus bull calves and heifers. The results were statistically significant. In the analysed herds, calving difficulties were sometimes observed in Simmental and Limousine cows, whereas calf deaths were only recorded in the Limousine herd.