

Effects of cow-calf separation on their behaviour

S u m m a r y

The artificial selection, as carried out for many years has caused the distinct changes in cattle performance traits. However, a lot of its natural behaviours have been almost unchanged. The highest manifestation, characterizing the social behaviours is connected with cow-calf relation. The problem of the separation a calf from a mother is one of the most controversial issues in modern cattle husbandry. The separation runs in the entirely different way in natural conditions and when a man controls it. The distinct differences are also found between various types of cattle performance. In semi-wild herds (*Bos indicus*) the separation of the calves from the mothers takes place according to the natural rules and is performed 7-14 months after calving. The weaning process is two weeks long and it does not result in the weakness of close relation between a mother and a calf. What is more, this relation is a basis for the consolidation of the herd with regard to the social structure. A cow at dairy farm has a direct contact with a calf not longer than 24 hours post-calving. The studies proved that, considering the animal welfare, so early separation is more advantageous as compared with the later separation. The reason is that at the beginning the close relation between a mother and a calf is not well established. The problem of the separation of calves from beef cows on pasture is much more complicated. Usually, it takes place not later than 7 months after calving. In that case various ways of separation are applied to minimize the negative effects, considering the economic losses and the optimal welfare. The most effective method seems to be so-called two-step weaning.