

Effect of the housing system on some fertility conformation assessment and reasons for culling in PHF cows of Black-and-White variety

Summary

Relationships between housing systems (tethered, loose) and non-production traits (reproductive parameters, conformation assessment, reasons for culling) were investigated. A total of 4273 Polish Holstein-Friesian (PHF) cows of Black-and-White variety were kept in three technological groups. Loose housing on deep litter proved to be the most efficient system. Cows kept in this system were characterized by the lowest culling rate and a short calving interval of 418 days. Analysis of the effect of housing system on overall conformation score showed that animals housed in loose pens on deep litter achieved the highest overall scores (79.44 pts) and tethered animals the lowest (78.72 pts). Analysis of the culling rate of the experimental cows showed that 17% cows were culled for infertility and reproductive disorders in the tethered system compared to 16% in boxes and on deep litter. Difficult births were the most frequent in loose barns with deep litter (1.32%) and the least frequent in the tethered system (0.69%). In all the systems studied, over 90% parturitions were natural or required only slight assistance. Most unassisted births were found in the tethered system (33.56%).