

Culling reasons in the population of Polish Holstein-Friesian Black and White cows

S u m m a r y

Culling reasons were analyzed for 1 441 446 Polish Holstein-Friesian Black and White dairy cows that left herds between 1995 and 2007. Due to changes in the coding of disposal reasons, implemented in 2003, the data set was divided into two periods; 1995-2002 (732 434 cows) and 2003-2007 (709 012 cows). Frequencies of culling reasons registered in the first period were as follows: sale for dairy purposes 24.8%, low production 7.4%, udder health 6.0%, infertility and reproductive problems 26.6%, infectious diseases 6.0%, old age 0.9%, injury/accident 28.2%. In the second period the frequencies of culling reasons were as follows: sale for dairy purposes 17.3%, low production 3.6%, udder health 10.9%, infertility and reproductive problems 30.7%, infectious diseases 3.3%, old age 2.1%, injury/accident 16.4%. The percentages of cows culled due to the added reasons were relatively small: metabolic and digestive diseases 3.3%, respiratory system diseases 0.4%, feet and legs problems 5.3%, and „other” 6.8%. The main culling reason, "infertility and reproductive problems", showed an increasing long-term trend. A similar increasing trend was noted for „udder problems". „Low production" showed an opposite, decreasing trend. The percentage of disposals due to health problems has increased (up to 60%) in the last few years. One consequence of this was an undesirable decline in the proportion of voluntary culling, which dropped from 32% in 1995-2002 to 14% in 2007.