

Adaptation of cows to an automatic milking system

Summary

Research was conducted in herd of cows kept on a family farm. The study period included the time before and after the introduction of a milking robot. At the beginning of the study the herd consisted of 55 cows during their 1st-9th lactation, milked in a milking parlour. Following the introduction of the Lely Automatic Milking System (AMS), the number of cows in the herd gradually increased. The paper presents an analysis of the age structure of the herd, the age and productivity of culled cows, milk yield, fat and protein content in milk during lactation stages for the entire herd and for 100 and 305 days of lactation for primiparous cows, and the health condition of the udder in primiparous cows. None of the indicators analysed were found to deteriorate following the introduction of AMS. In the first year of milking by AMS the average annual productivity of the herd increased by 500 kg of milk.

KEY WORDS: milking robot, cow, milk, fat, protein, culling, mastitis