Mastitis control in Swedish dairy herds
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Mastitis remains a major issue in dairy production despite research efforts and control programs. The aim of this study was to investigate the degree to which recommended control practices are being implemented. Data on herd characteristics and applied preventive measures were collected through a postal questionnaire, and 428 usable answers were obtained (response rate 48%). Cleaning of stalls at least 2 times daily and replacement of teatcup liners according to recommendations were performed in over 90% of the herds. In more than 80% of the herds, cows were treated with a postmilking teat disinfectant and feeding plans were continuously gone through and revised. Herds with tiestalls grouped lactating cows according to udder health status twice as often as herds with freestalls and milking parlour (70% and 35%, respectively). Herds with automatic milking systems rarely considered udder health status when grouping their lactating cows (7%). Very few herds (7%) grouped dry cows according to udder health status. Half of the herds allowed cows to calve in single pens that were cleaned between animals, this was however implemented in only 27% of the tiestall herds. A milking order based on udder health status was applied in over 80% of the tiestall herds, whereas two thirds of the herds with freestalls and milking parlour and almost all of the herds with automatic milking systems ignored the udder health status of cows during milkings. Freestall herds with milking parlour more frequently used milkers’ gloves, washed dirty udders with water, stimulated hardmilking cows manually, and rinsed clusters with warm water after milking cows with clinical mastitis or high somatic cell count as compared with tiestall herds. It was concluded that advisors must emphasize the importance of grouping of cows according to udder health status and calving hygiene. Furthermore, special attention should be paid to tiestall herds and herds with automatic milking systems where the implementation rates are lower than in freestall herds with milking parlour.