Risk factors for *Staphylococcus aureus* in bulk tank milk samples from Swiss dairy herds
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Mastitis is a frequent problem in Swiss dairy herds and it has a significant economic impact. One of the main pathogens causing subclinical and clinical mastitis is *Staphylococcus aureus*. The aim of this study was to identify risk factors for the presence of *S. aureus* in bulk tank milk (BTM) samples from Swiss dairy herds. One hundred herds with a theoretical BTM somatic cell count between 200,000 and 300,000 cells/ml in 2010 were recruited and visited once during milking time in 2011. A standardized protocol investigating farm specific data, milking equipment, milking routine and hygiene was filled out. A sample of BTM was taken and tested by quantitative PCR for the presence of the *S. aureus*-specific nuc gene. This resulted in a *S. aureus*-prevalence of 48% (farms with single-visit positive bulk milk samples). Multivariable logistic regression models are currently being developed to identify risk factors for presence of *S. aureus* in BTM samples. This is the first study identifying risk factors for *S. aureus* in BTM from a nation-wide sample of mastitis problem herds. Detection of risk factors will help defining possible intervention strategies to improve udder health in *S. aureus* positive herds.