

Welfare assessment as part of welfare planning in organic calf production



Berit Hansen¹, Britt I. F. Henriksen², Vonne Lund³

¹Norwegian Institute for Agricultural and Environmental Research, Arctic Agricultural and Land Use Division, Tjøtta

²Norwegian Institute for Agricultural and Environmental Research, Organic Agricultural Division, Tingvoll

³National Veterinary Institute, Oslo

Welfare assessment system in ANIPLAN calf

Animal welfare is regarded as a basic parameter in organic beef -and milk production. It is important to focus on good animal welfare at all levels, also including calves. Experiences from former projects show that calf welfare often represents a problem in organic and conventional farms, depending on the farmer's priorities, attitudes and knowledge. A CORE Organic project "Minimizing medicine use in organic dairy herds through animal health and welfare planning" (ANIPLAN) was initiated in 2008 and is a collaboration between seven European countries, including Norway. The aim of the Norwegian project group, lead by the Norwegian Veterinary Institute, was to develop a calf welfare assessment system, suitable for welfare advising and planning in organic milk production farms. The system focuses on animal based parameters, management, individual clinical score, colostrum intake and feeding system.



Objectives in ANIPLAN

The main aim of the project is to minimize medicine use in organic dairy herds through active and well planned animal health and welfare promotion and disease prevention.

Intermediate objectives:

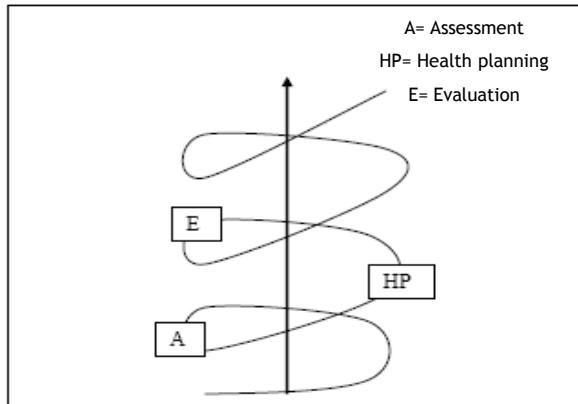
- 1) Develop animal health and welfare planning principles for organic dairy farms under diverse conditions based on an evaluation of current experiences.
- 2) Application of animal health and welfare assessment based on the WelfareQuality parameters in different types of organic dairy herds across Europe. This will result in an overview of the herds and allow for potential adaptations for the organic situation and improvements of the system (e.g. pasture systems, longer cow/calf contact). For calves, a special system is developed by the Norwegian partners, and combined and tested together with the WelfareQuality assessment system.
- 3) Develop guidelines for communication about animal health and welfare promotion in different settings. This can be part of existing animal health advisory services or farmer groups such as the Danish Stable School system and the Dutch network program.

Collaborating research institutes in this project:



Veterinærinstituttet
National Veterinary Institute

Health planning as a process for continuous improvement



Norwegian ANIPLAN calf protocol:

Main focus on Animal-based on-farm assessments and -parameters:

- Qualitative behavioural assessments
- Human-Animal relationship
- Individual clinical score
- Housing environment
- Feeding routines with special focus on colostrum, milkfeeding and management
- Collection of health parameters from the National health record data base
- Evaluates resources- and management-based parameters in a 2-step time saving system
- The system is designed for a 2-3 hours on-farm advising



Thanks to all the Norwegian farmers who have put their livestock in disposal for this project.

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