





Introduction



ProYoungStock
Promoting young stock and cow health and welfare by natural feeding systems
EU-financed research project 2018 – 2021

Participating countries: Austria
France
Germany
Italy
Poland
Slovenia
Sweden
Switzerland

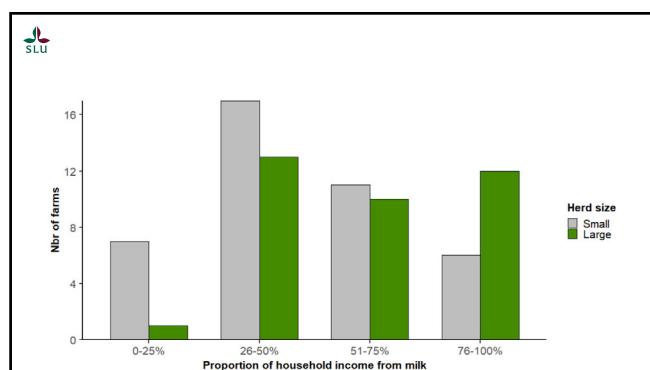
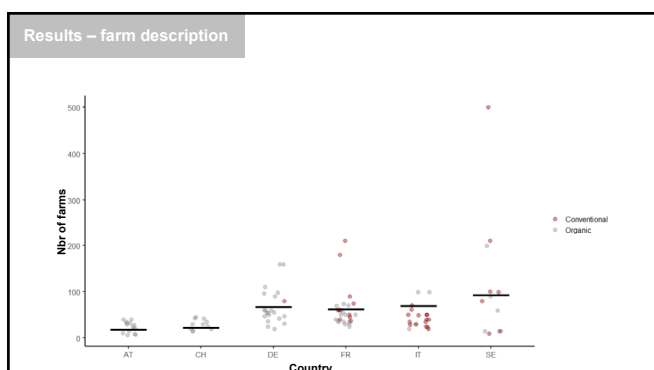


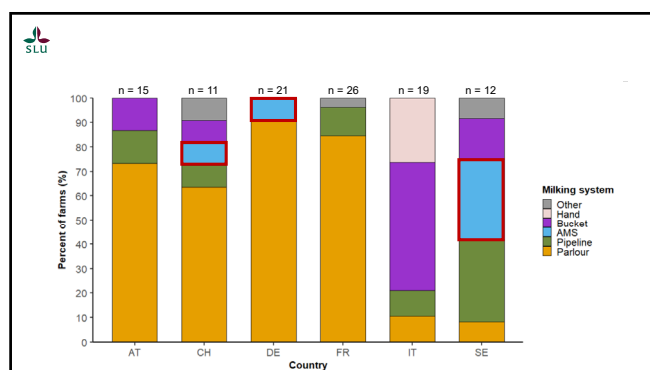
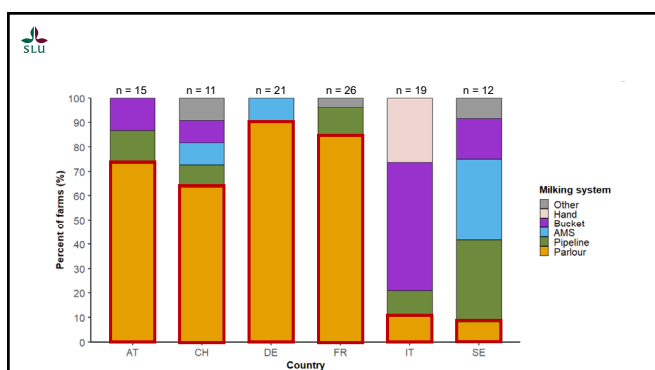
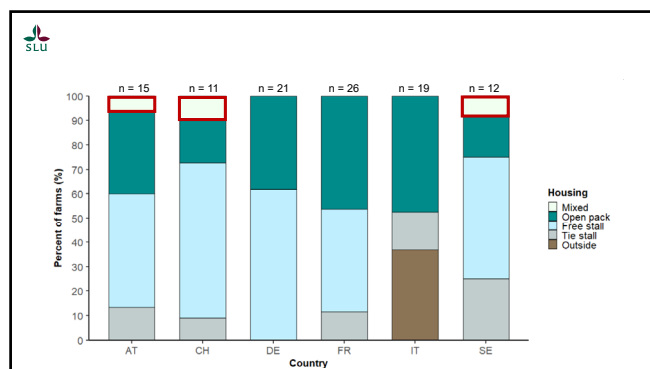
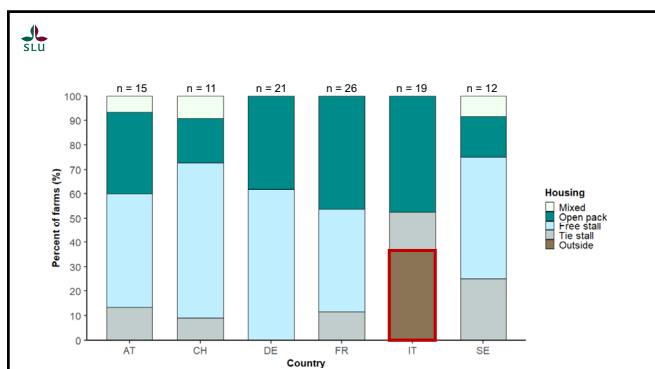
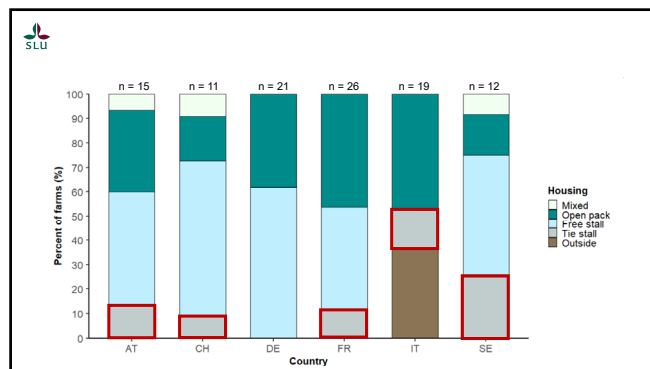
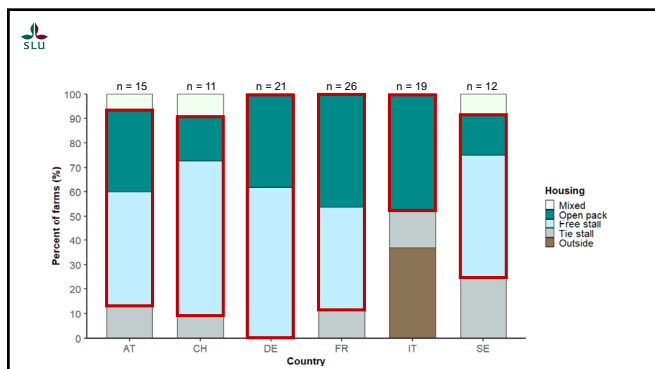
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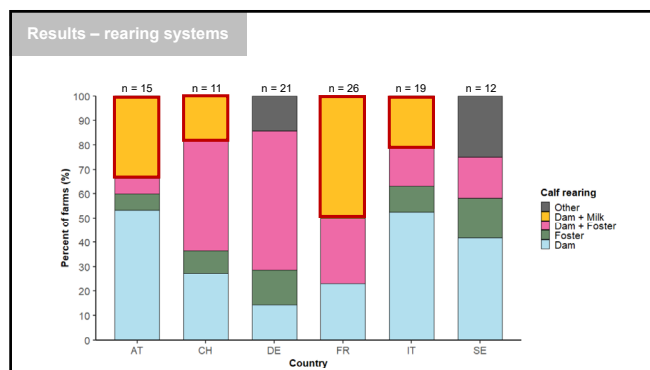
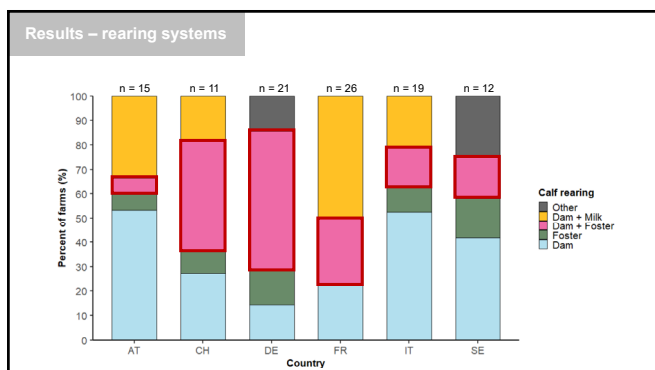
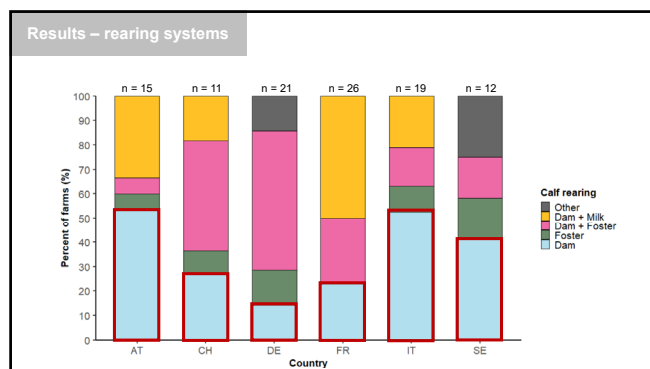
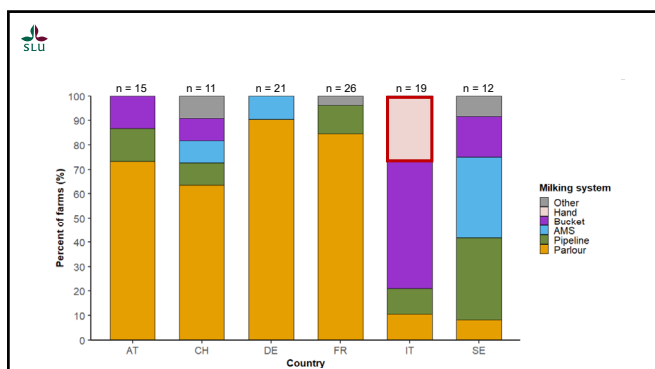
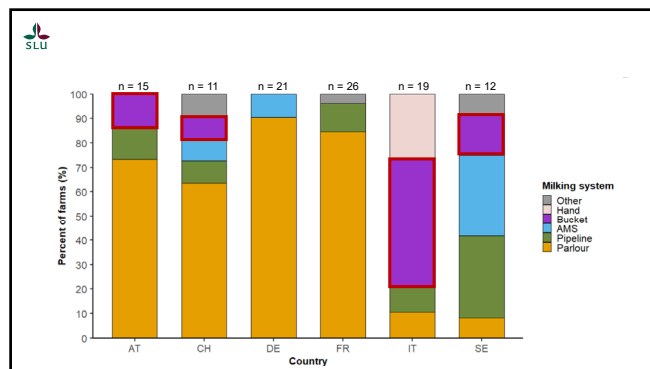
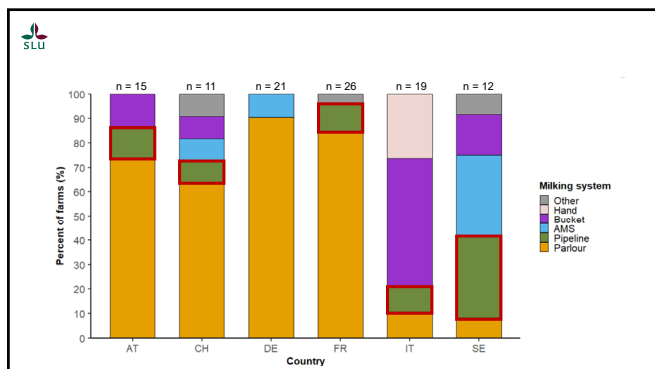
Methods

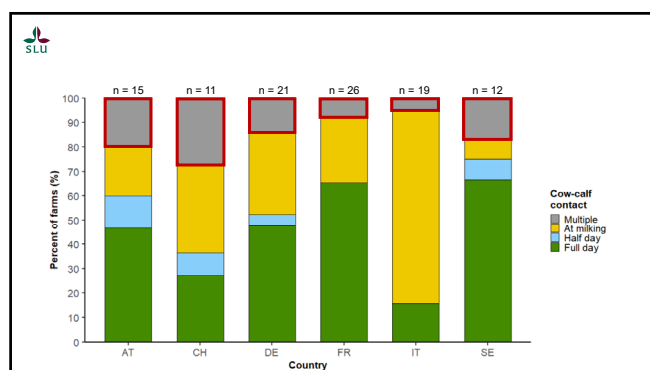
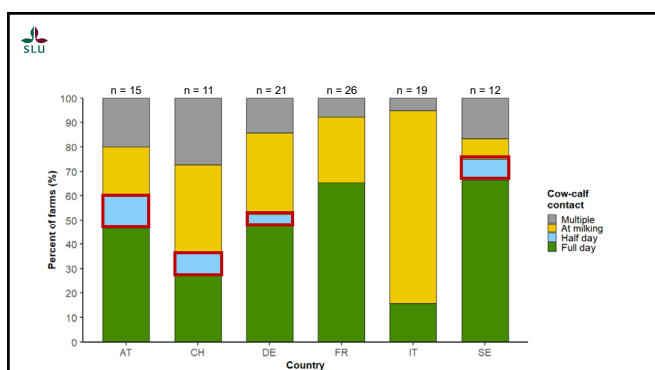
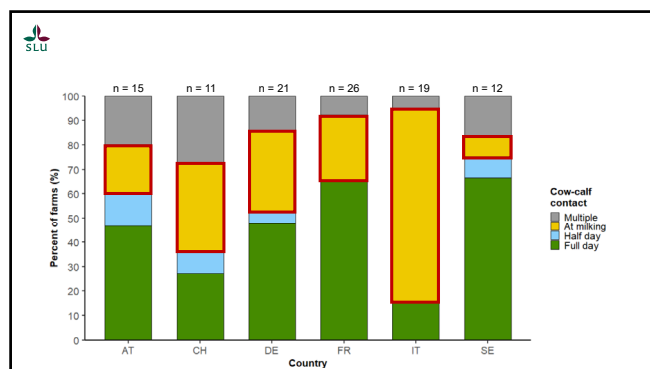
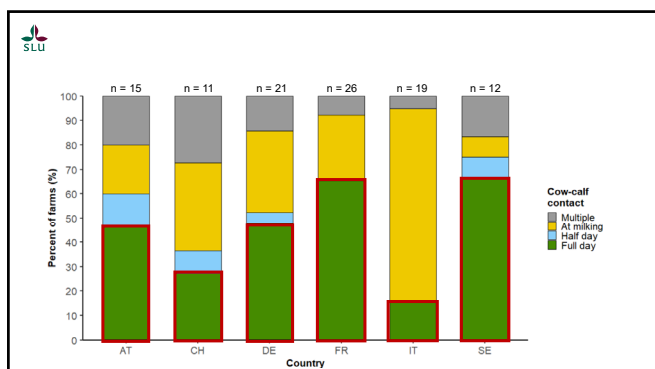
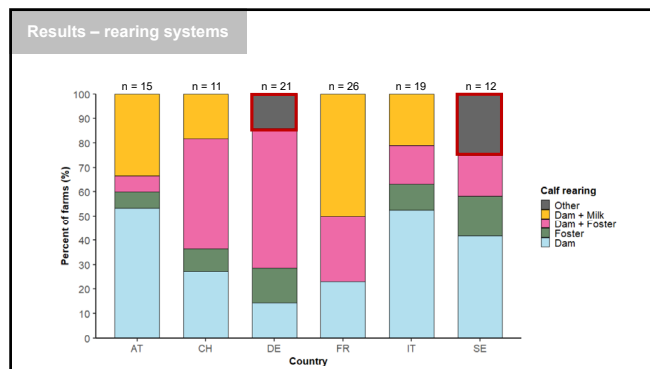
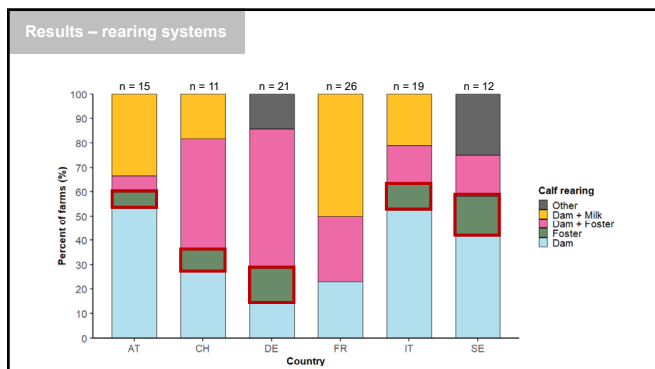
Survey study

- **Goal:** describe the type of housing and management used on European farms with cow-calf contact (CCC) systems
- Farm selection based on each country's individual circumstances
- **Prerequisite:** calves kept with lactating cow **at least 7 days**
- 104 farms with CCC identified in six countries
- Farmer/manager interviewed on site or over the telephone







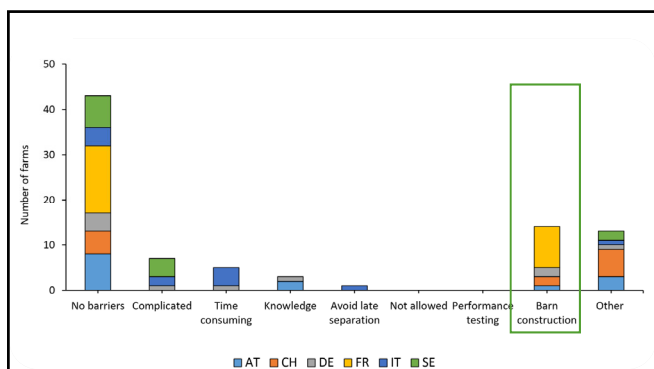


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- Colostrum intake achieved by suckling on 92% of farms
- 74% of all farms milked suckled cows
 - 60% of farms using foster cows either did not milk suckled cows, or only milked the dams
- Of the farms that milked suckled cows, 82% milked twice per day
- Median number of calves 1 – 3 per foster cow depending on country
- Forage from average 1.0 – 2.9 wks depending on country
- Concentrate from average 0.7 – 4.5 wks depending on country
 - 31% of farms did not feed concentrate

Results – separation

- 85% of farms practiced abrupt separation
- Negative responses after separation
 - Vocalisation among cows: 73% of farms
 - Vocalisation among calves: 54% of farms
 - Impaired milk let-down: 16% of farms
 - Decreased calf weight: 9% of farms
- Strategies to mitigate separation distress
 - Reducing the number of cows the calves can suckle
 - Reducing daily contact time
 - Letting younger calves suckle the cows first
 - Starting to milk suckled cows some time before separation



Conclusions

- Non-random farm selection
- CCC is practiced under very variable conditions on European farms
- Large differences in herd size, housing systems, milking systems, and calf rearing practice between and within countries
- What is optimal weaning practice?
- Potential challenges with indoor housing

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Thank you!

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Photo: Emma Tegler

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