

Analysis of medical treatments in organic dairy herds in the Netherlands

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Of the dairy herds in The Netherlands 1.1 % is organic

Type of farm	Number of animals (in 2002)
Organic (n=339)	16.724
Organic + regular	1.485.531



Health Management Organic Herds

- Precautionary Principle
 - Use the right breeds
 - Stimulate natural behaviour
 - Healthy food
 - Outdoor access
 - Exercise
 - No overcrowding
 - Good social interactions



EU regulation medical treatment:

Phytotherapeutic and homeopathic products shall be used in preference to chemically-synthesised allopathic veterinary medicinal products or antibiotics, provided that their therapeutic effect is effective for the species of animal, and the condition for which the treatment is intended



Use of conventional medicines in organic animal husbandry

- One (broilers; fattening pigs) or two (dairy herds) treatments allowed per year.
- Treatments prescribed by law, vaccinations and antiparasitic treatments not included.
- A series of treatments is counted as one treatment.
- Treatment of associated disease symptoms is counted as one treatment.
- Herd treatment is allowed under supervision of veterinarian.
- Waiting times are doubled



Background

Little is known about the types of medicines used to treat diseased animals and the frequencies of these treatments in organic dairy herds.

Question

How do organic farmers cope with EU animal health regulations?



Reported diseases and numbers of treated animals in organic dairy herds

Disease	Total
Clinical mastitis	737
Claw disorders	483
Gastrointestinal/lung worms	474
Fasciola hepatica	216
Subclinical mastitis	166
Calves diarrhea	149
Uteritis	147
Acetonemia	142
Laminitis	132



Top ten regular drugs used to treat clinical mastitis

Drugs	Number of farms (N=30)
Avuloxil	14
Delvomast MC	8
Mamyzin	8
Cobactan	8
Dofatrim-ject	5
Albiotic formula	3
Finadyne	2
Diatrim	2
Pathozone	2
Nafpenzal	2

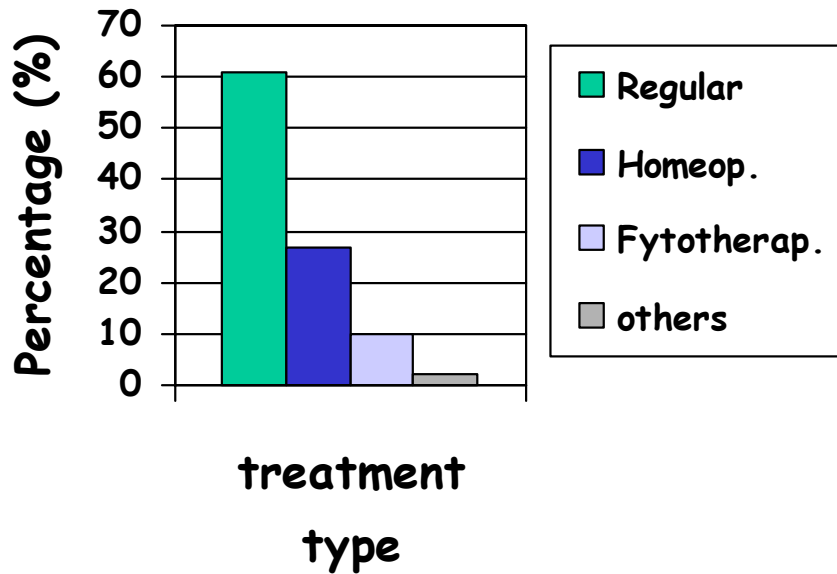


Top ten alternative medicines used to treat mastitis

medicine	Number of herds (n=30)
Cai-Pan/udder mint (phytotherapy)	16
Mamil Phyt plus (homeop.)	6
Mammicurine (homeop.)	3
Traumeel (homeop.)	2
Lachesis (homeop.)	2
Mastex (homeop.)	2
Nosode (homeop.)	2
Bryonia (homeop.)	2
Tigerbalsem (phytotherapy)	1

Medicine use in organic dairy herds

Types of treatments



- 160 different medicines
 - 61% regular
 - 39% alternative

Medicines used in organic dairy herds

The 5 most often used medicines

Regular medicine	Number of farms
Ca-Mg-infusion	20
Avuloxil	14
Excenel RTU	14
Delvomast MC	9
Afterbirth Capsule R	9

Alternative medicine	Number of farms
Cai-Pan (udder mint)	12
Lachesis Compositum	5
Mamil Phyt Plus	5
Calcarea Carbonica	4
Uterale	4



Conclusions Animal Health Care Organic Dairy Herds

- Udder health, claw problems and parasitic diseases are the main problem.
- In total more than 160 different medicines were used of which 39% alternative.
- Most farmers do not register the use of alternative medicines.
- Evidence showing effectiveness of alternative medicines is needed.



General Conclusions

- Many medicines are used of which the effectiveness has not been proven, which does not conform to EU regulations
- More involvement of regular veterinary medical faculties is needed
- Withholding of proper animal health care may be harmful to the “organic” image



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