

Avoiding Disasters with Freestall Design

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Introduction

Mistakes in freestall design are commonplace, and a matter of inches can make the difference between a satisfactory stall design and a herd disaster. A systematic way of assessing a freestall from a cow's perspective is required to accurately identify the problem and provide a least-cost solution.

Materials and Methods

A five-point system of analyzing freestall design is presented. Steps involve determination of the following: 1) Is there adequate surface cushion? 2) Is there

adequate body resting area? 3) Is there room to "lunge and bob"? 4) Is there adequate room below and behind the neck rail? 5) Is the curb height appropriate?

Results and Conclusions

Four examples of freestall design and management problems are presented using the five-point system of assessment described above. For each scenario: 1) Color pictures will be used to depict the problem. 2) Stall dimensions and bedding type will be clearly shown. 3) Associated cow health problems will be summarized. 4) A Cow Comfort Index will be given. 5) A diagnosis will be suggested. 6) A solution to the problem will be described.

Using an Individual Cow Somatic Cell Count Diagnostic Algorithm to Investigate Herd Milk Quality Problems

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Introduction

When investigating herds with high somatic cell counts (SCC), how do we direct our advice to target areas with the biggest impact on herd profitability? Analysis of individual cow SCC from the current and previous six months Dairy Herd Improvement (DHI) recordings using Wisgraph to calculate a number of udder infection parameters; comparison of these data with benchmark performance for the top 10% of herds; and using the algorithm described below may help.

Materials and Methods

The algorithm follows a sequence of questions:

- 1) Is herd prevalence of infected cows predominantly chronic cows (>200,000 for at least the last two tests), or are there many new infections each month?
- 2) If herd new-infection rate is elevated, is this due to a high rate of fresh cows calving with a first SCC > 200,000/ml, or are the new infections occurring in cows which are already lactating?