

TAKE HOME MESSAGE

Our study has shown the importance of analyzing treatment efficacy post-partum. Farmers demand treatment efficacy if treatment strategy has to be changed. As of today, many farmers do not analyze their own herd data with regard to udder health post-partum.

THE ROAD TO 6TH LACTATION INCREASED LONGEVITY THROUGH HEALTHY COWS

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Objective

The aim of our study was to investigate the management strategies applied at herd level in the period around dry off. Based on the data collected and literature review a written recommendations was developed.

Materials and Methods

Selection criteria herds

- Data for analyzing SCC dynamics post partum was collected from the national cattle database
- The herds were all in DHI recording
- SCC analyzes included > 900,000 calvings in 1578 herds the past 6 years
- Herds with > 100 cows, a herd health contract and electronic records for mastitis treatment and dry-off data recorded was selected for interview
- Herds were allocated in to three groups; less then 250 cows, between 250-500 cows and > 500 cows
- Each group was then allocated to four subgroups according to treatment to make sure that all treatment strategies were represented

Qualitative semi-structured interview

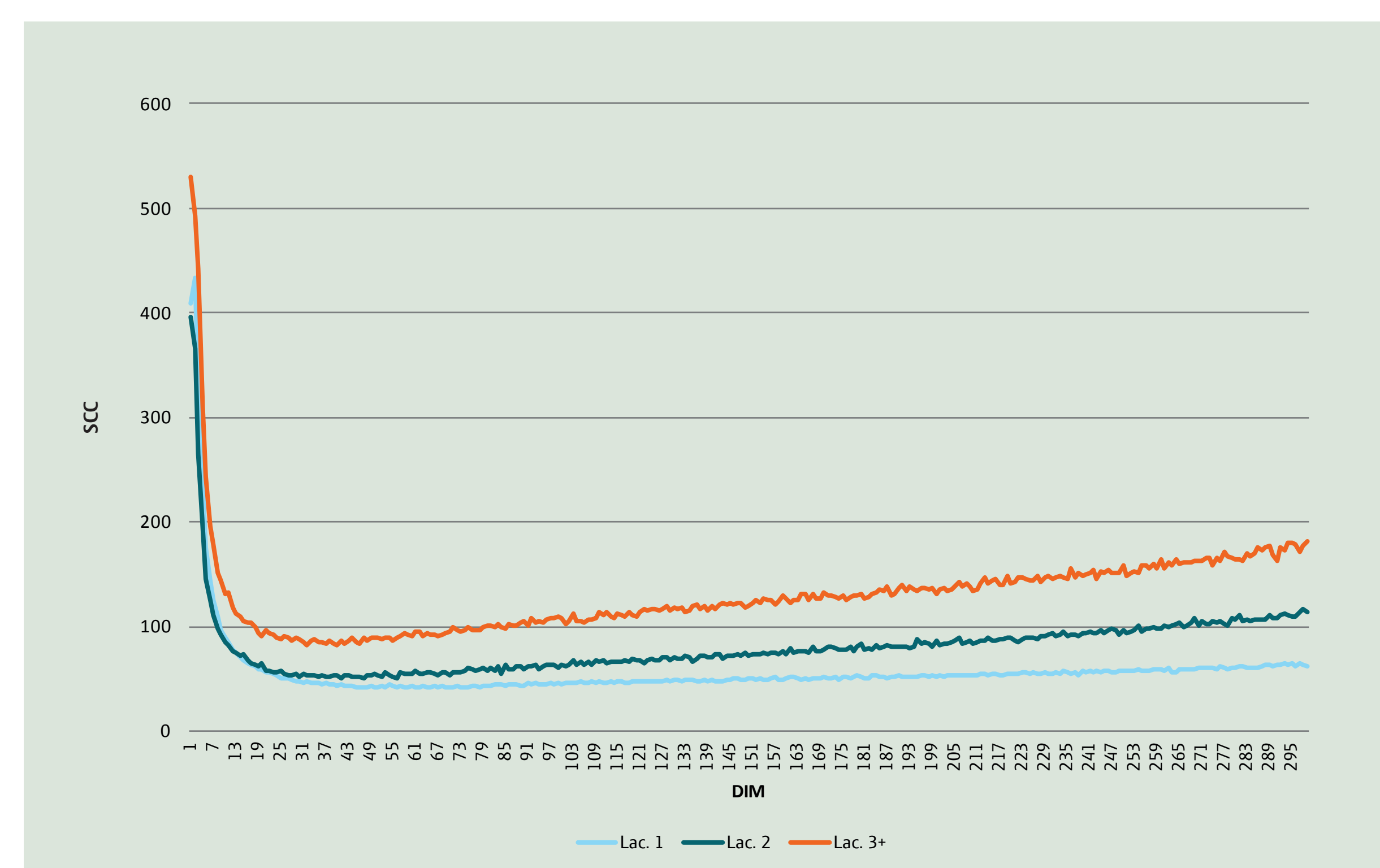
- Interview was performed in 9 herds by the same person
- The interview process was ended, when saturation was reached
- The interviewer followed up upon questions, explored statements, and asked for examples
- Focus was upon feeding management, milking frequency, housing and separation

Results

SCC dynamics post-partum

The dynamics of the SCC post-partum are illustrated in figure 1. with the geometric SCC at the first DHI as reference point for the three parity groups. The lowest SCC was; 1. parity (day 46), 2. parity (day 47) and older cows (days 32)

FIGURE 1: GEOMETRIC SCC AT TEST DAY *1000



Semi-structured interview

- Two distinct groups could be formed with regards to management at dry off:
 - One group used abrupt cessation regardless of milk yield and parity, and did not recognize cows in the period close to dry off as any different than other lactating cows.
 - The other group used management routines like feeding a low-energy ration, reduced milking frequency, and separate housing in the period close to dry off.
- There was agreement by most farmers, that treatment at dry off could have a positive effect on udder health. Economics and treatment efficacy were most important with regard towards treatment at dry off, though most farmers did not analyze their own herd data for treatment efficacy.
- The interview showed a positive attitude towards a change in treatment strategy if this could improve udder health post-partum. Therefore, illustrating treatment efficacy will be important towards the farmer in changing treatment strategy.

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