

# A QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY ON AVAILABILITY AND MANAGEMENT OF HOSPITAL PENS FOR DANISH DAIRY COWS

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# BACKGROUND

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- Increased focus on management and housing of sick/injured dairy cows
- Denmark: Hospital pens are mandatory from July 2016
  - 1 pen/space per 100 cows
- Current status hospital pens?



# QUESTIONNAIRE

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- Online questionnaire
- Included 32 main questions + 27 sub questions

## Example:

- Main question: Type of hospital pen >cubicles or deep bedding?
- Sub question: detailed information about flooring in cubicles or type of deep bedding

Total number of questions depended on responses to previous questions



# QUESTIONNAIRE

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- Split into 5 main sections
  1. General information about the herd
  2. Availability and design of hospital pens
  3. Disease control
  4. Management and communication
  5. Evaluation of design and availability

# DISTRIBUTION OF SURVEY

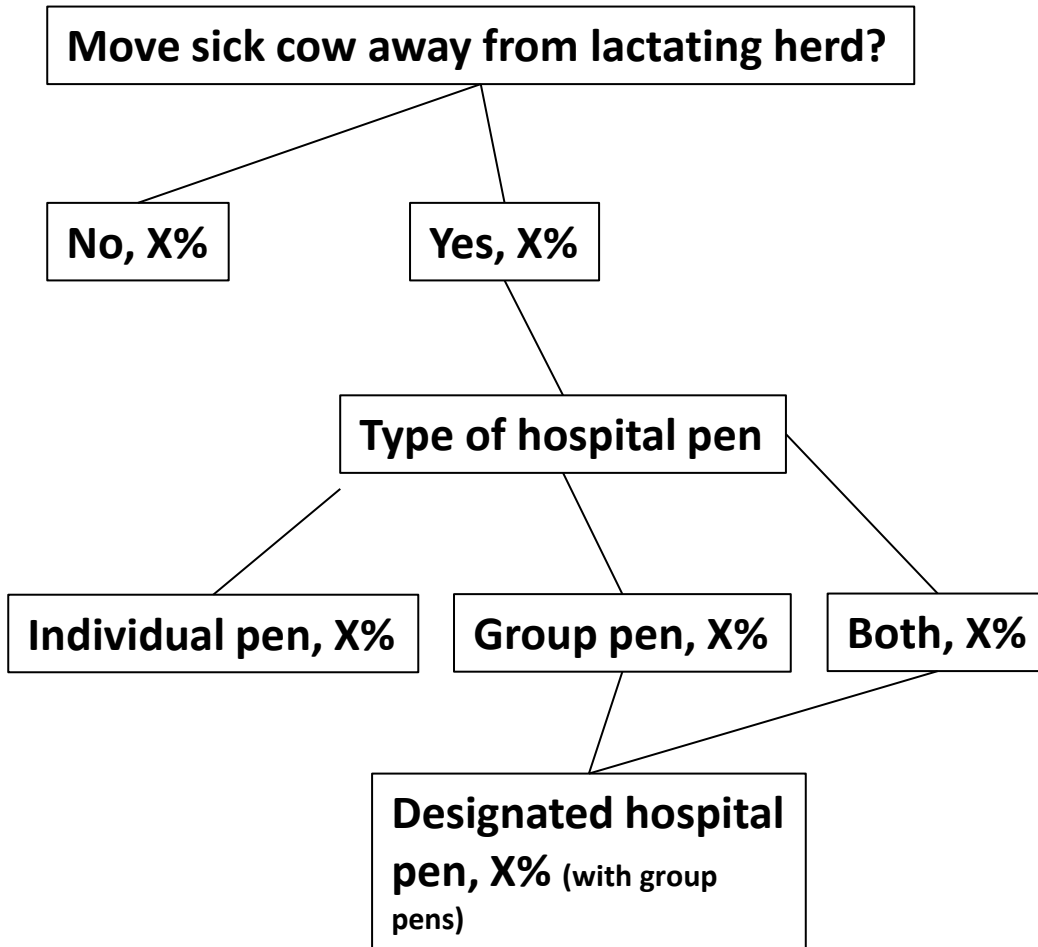
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- Distributed by e-mail to 1296 herds = 40% of Danish dairy herds
- List provided by RYK (The Fund for handling registration and milk yield control)

## Response rate

- Response rate of 24.5%
  - Approximately 10% of all Danish dairy herd
  - Representative according to milk yield, organic herds and herd size

# RESULTS - AVAILABILITY



## Group hospital pen:

- Might also house healthy transition + dry cows

## Designated hospital pen:

- Exclusively housing for sick/injured cows

# WHICH COWS ARE HOUSED IN HOSPITAL PENS?

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Graph removed!

Large variation found in responds to which diseases leads to use of hospital pens

# RESULTS - COMMUNICATION

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- In X% of the farms information regarding sick cows was passed on between employees in a systematic way
  - X%: Oral communication
  - X%: Written on board, paper or computer





# EVALUATION DONE BY FARMERS

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Asked to evaluate their own hospital pens

- Number of available pens compared to needed number of pens
  - X%: The number of pens matched the needs
  - X%: Too few hospital pens
  - X%: Too many hospital pens

# EVALUATION DONE BY FARMERS

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Asked to evaluate their own hospital pens

- Do the facilities in the hospital pens match the need of the sick/injured cows?
  - X%: Not fully match the needs
  - X%: Appropriate for the needs

# CONCLUSION

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Almost all can move sick cow (X%)

- In 2013 9% could not move sick cows (Houe et al., 2016)
- X% have less than 1 hospital space/100 cows
  - Danish law requirement from July 2016

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Large variation in the use of hospital pens for various types of diseases → Lack knowledge about the gain of using them!

# CONCLUSION

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Almost all can move sick cow (98%)

- In 2013 9% could not move sick cows (Houe et al., 2016)
- 17% have less than 1 hospital space/100 cows
  - Danish law requirement from July 2016

Large variation in the use of hospital pens for various types of diseases → Lack knowledge about the gain of using them!

Many finds that the hospital pens do not meet the needs of the sick cows → need for more evidence-based knowledge

# RELATED RESEARCH

- Seek to establish knowledge about the benefits of using hospital pens for mastitic and lame dairy cows
- Housing in hospital pen  $><$  housing in milking herd
  - Behaviour
  - Recovery ( $\downarrow$  lameness score / bacterial clearance)
  - Productivity
  - Long term: productivity, culling and treatment



vs.



STSM project!

**Thanks to...**

- **SEGES for help with survey distribution**
- **RYK for list of farmers**
- **Participating farmers**

**THANK YOU FOR THE ATTENTION!**

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