Using an automated milk feeder during the suckling period will reduce stress behaviour at separation.

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Suckling in dairy production - background

- Suckling
- Weaning
- Separation

- Suckling
- Weaning and separation

- Suckling
- Separation
- Weaning
Aim

• Make the separation after a suckling period less stressful to the calf
• Evaluate how the nutritional dependence on the dam affects the dairy calf’s behavioural response to separation
Material and methods

Nursing phase 6 weeks

Total separation 3 d

Partial separation 4 d

Housed in adjacent pens during the day

Together during the night

08.00 - 20.00

20.00 - 08.00

6 weeks

4 d

3 d
Study design

Observation of newborn calves during the nursing phase (6 weeks).

- Milk feeding
  - Dependent (D) n=10
  - Semi-dependent (SD) n=10
  - Independent (I) n=10

- Observations:
  - High pitched vocalizations (No.)
  - Low pitched vocalizations (No.)
  - Head through separation barrier (s)
  - Play (s)

Partial separation: 4 days

- Dependent (D) n=10
- Semi-dependent (SD) n=10
- Independent (I) n=10

Total separation: 3 days

Nursing: 6 weeks
Results - vocalizations

I = independent = AMF, no suckling
D = dependent = suckling only
SD = semi-dependent = AMF + suckling
Results: vocalizations relative to AMF use after separation

![Graph showing vocalization counts for AMF use and no AMF use for partial and total separation. The graphs indicate a statistically significant difference (*) in vocalizations after separation.]
Results  play  corr. milk&voc

Spearman rho: -0.771, P = 0.001
Conclusion

• Implementing a supplemental milk source can reduce calf vocalizations and increase play behaviour after separation

• Training must be given
Thank you for your attention!

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