

The Evaluation of Commingled Calves and Dams versus Separated Calves and Dams on Behavior, Physiology, and Production

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Objective: Assess the effects of commingling on dam and calf behavior, milk production, and calf weight gain.

Hypothesis: No differences among calves and dams housed together or separately.

Milking parlor

Calf Hutches

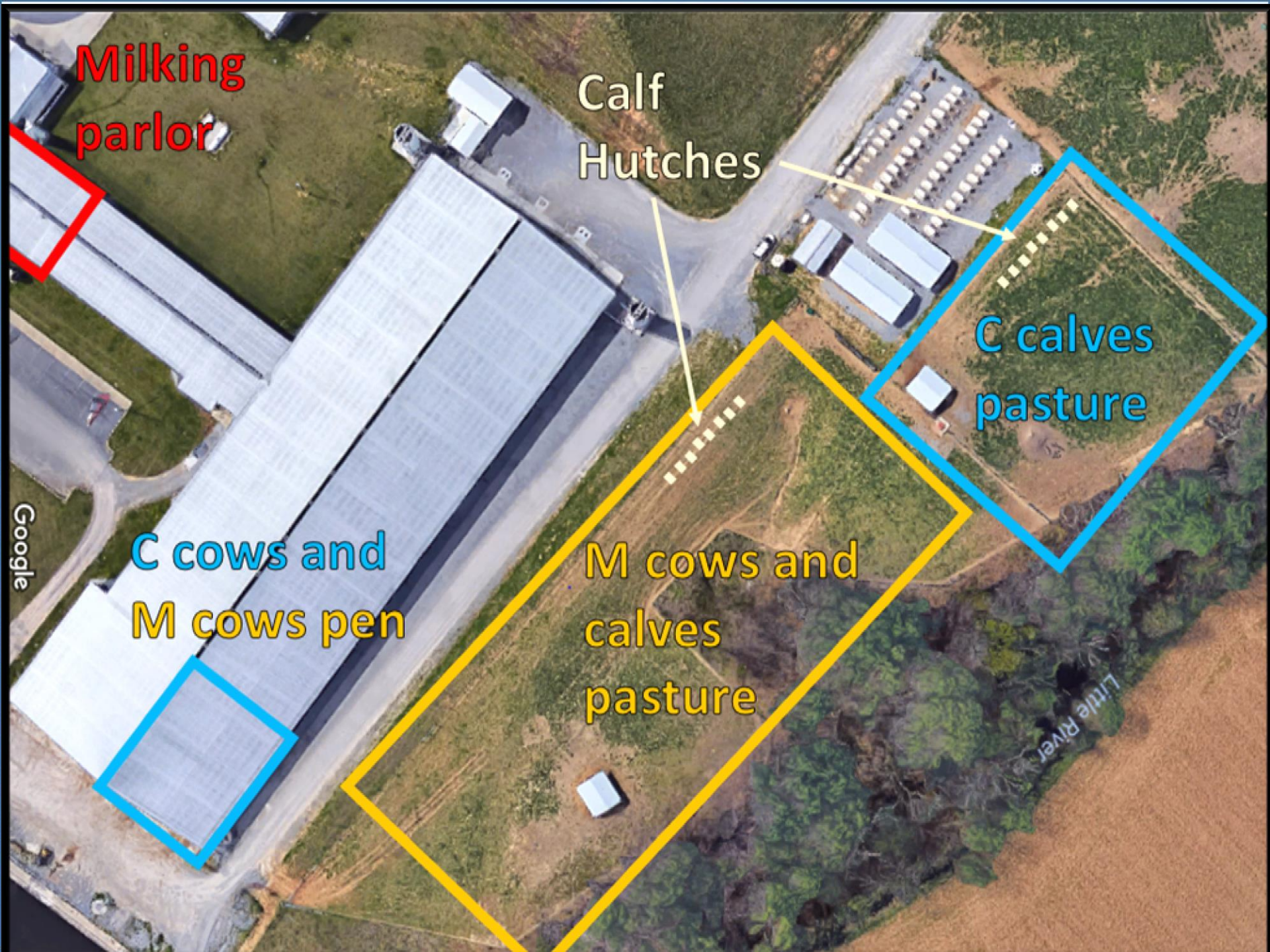
C calves pasture

C cows and M cows pen

M cows and calves pasture

Little River

Google



**D1 to D3:
Test Passive
Transfer, BW**

**D5:
Treatment
Begins**

**D5 to D19:
Daily: 3x/d feeding 6 L
3x week: Health Score
1x week: Body Weight
D10 approach test**



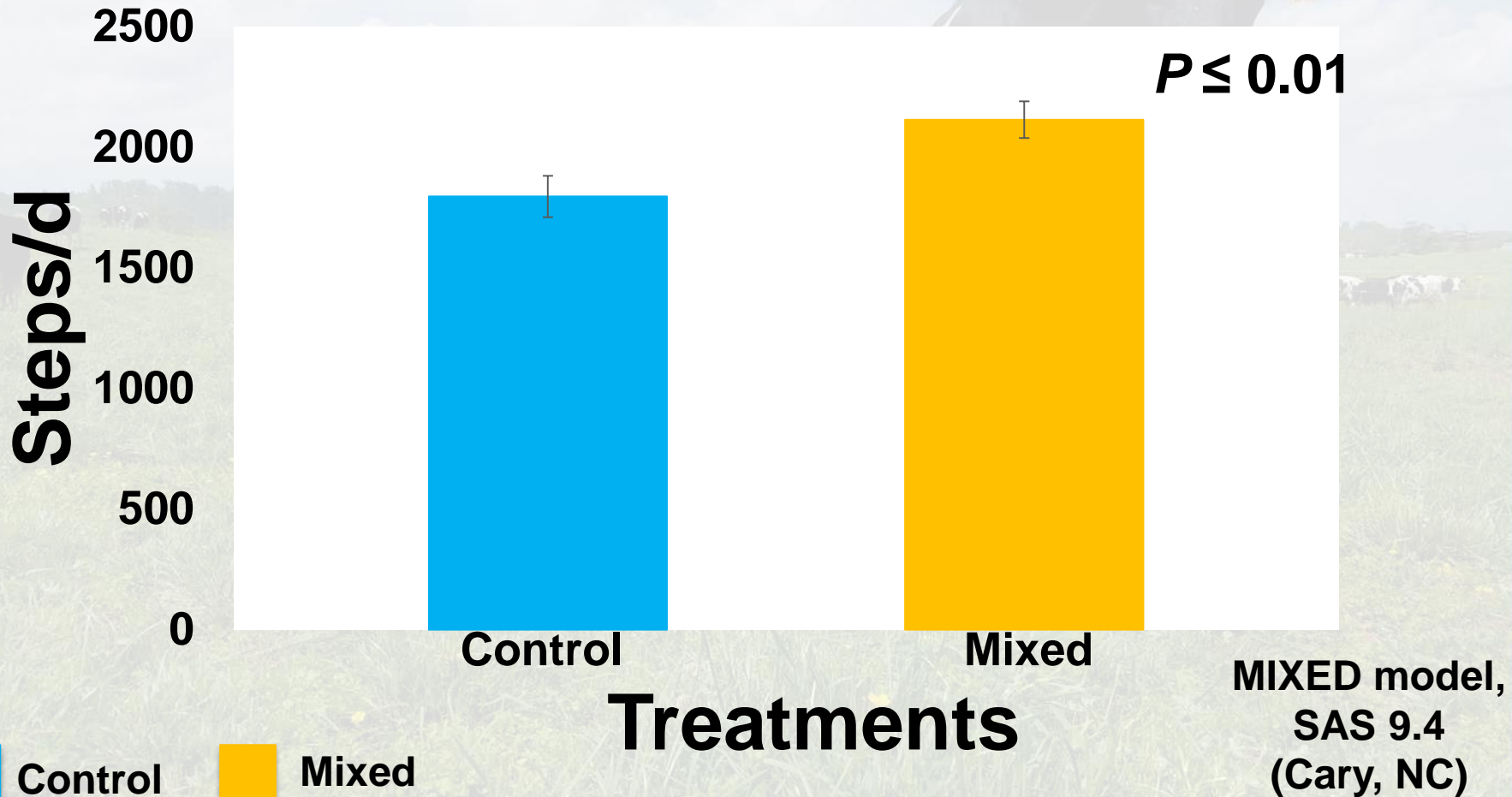
**D0:
Parturition**

**D5:
Treatment
Begins**

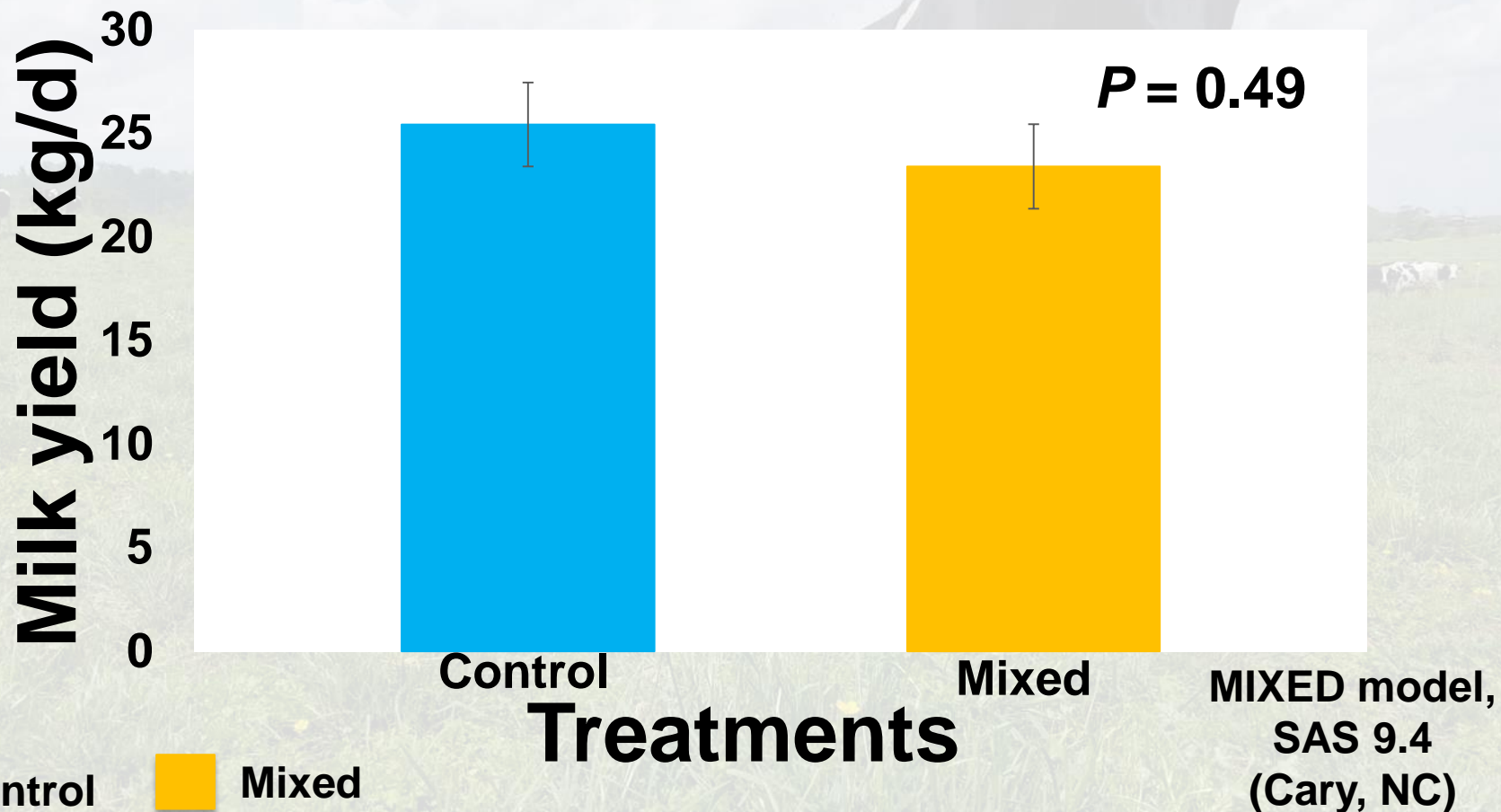
**D5 to D19:
Daily: Milk Production
2x week: Uterine Health Score
1x week: Teat End Swab
Milk components**



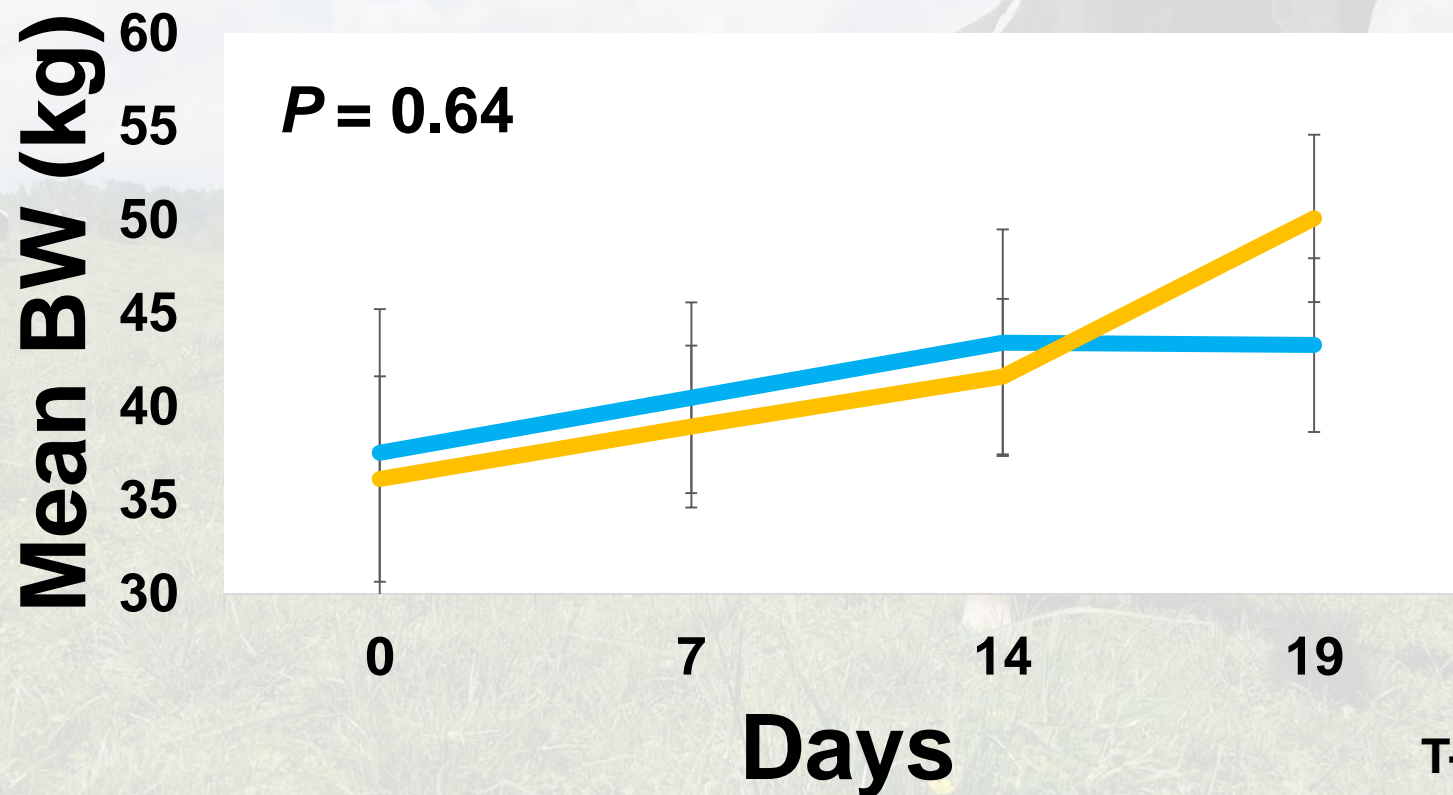
Mixed dams' took more steps per day than control dams



Milk yield was not significantly different by treatment



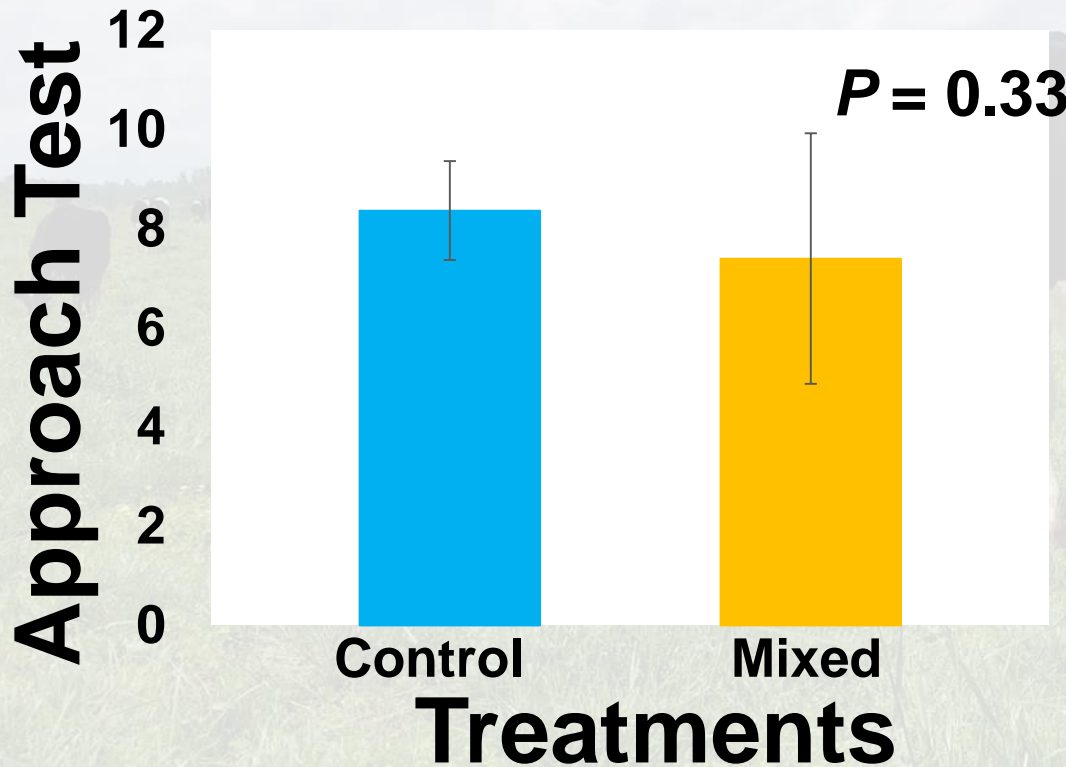
Body weight was not significantly different between treatments



Control Mixed

T-Tests
SAS 9.4
(Cary, NC)

Calf approachability was not significantly different



MacKay et al., 2014

Control Mixed

T-Tests
SAS 9.4
(Cary, NC)



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Conclusions: No differences between treatments

- Milk yield
- Milk composition
- BW
- Health
- Lying or standing time of calves
- Lying behavior of dams
- Approach

Implications

- No negative effects on calves and dams
- Shorter time before separation may help increase dam-calf bond



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Questions?



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