CHANGES OF THE RUMINATION CHARACTERISTICS IN DAIRY COWS AFTER CHANGE TMR COMPOSITION

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To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.11118/actaun201967051153
Received: 22. 7. 2019, Accepted: 2. 9. 2019

To cite this article: JUHÁS PETER, ŠPULEROVÁ KATARÍNA, VAVRIŠÍNOVÁ KLÁRA, HOZÁKOVÁ KATARÍNA, STRAPÁK PETER. 2019. Changes of the Rumination Characteristics in Dairy Cows After Change TMR Composition. Acta Universitatis Agriculturae et Silviculturae Mendelianae Brunensis, 67(5): 1153–1157.

Abstract

Rumination behavior in cattle is important for health and reproduction management of herd. The aim of presented paper was to evaluate change in rumination behavior in dairy cattle after changing total mixed ration (TMR) composition. Twenty-eight multiparous Red Holstein dairy cows were observed during rumination in first month after calving and in fourth month after calving. Cows were fed different total mixed ratio at beginning of lactation in first month after calving (TMR1) and in mid of lactation period in fourth month after calving (TMR2). TMR2 has higher content of roughage. Length of the single rumination period and number of jaw movements during rumination one bolus were recorded. Frequency of jaw movement per minute was calculated from recorded rumination characteristics. Rumination of one bolus TMR2 was longer (TMR1 = 53.97 ±8.241 sec, TMR2 = 57.57 ±6.290 sec) and cow perform more jaw movements (TMR1 = 61.0 ±10.674, TMR2 = 65.99 ±9.682) than ruminating bolus TMR1. Difference in duration of rumination one bolus as well as number of jaw movement was significant (P < 0.001). Frequency of jaw movement was not significantly affected (P > 0.05) and seem to be intra-individual stable. Rumination evaluated by correlation of rumination characteristics for TMR1 and TMR2 was intra-individual stable despite of changes in times of jaw movement and duration of one bolus rumination.

Keywords: dairy cattle, frequency, jaw movement, Red Holstein, rumination

INTRODUCTION

The ruminating is part of feeding behavior in ruminants, different form other animals. Its functions are to reduce feed particle, to increase particle surface/volume ratio, to improve microbial access and feed degradation, to facilitate passage of undigested residues of feed, to stimulate secretion of saliva as well as to maintain rumen pH (Poppi and Norton, 1980; Welch, 1982; Beauchemin, 1991; McAllister et al., 1994; Mertens, 1997; Watt et al., 2015; Fustini et al., 2017). Cattle spend approximately 8 hours per day ruminating usually, but times up to 12 hours per day are reported (Welch, 1982; Beauchemin, 1991; Albright 1993; Melin et al., 2007; DeVries et al., 2009; Suarez-Mena et al., 2013; Liboreiro et al., 2015). The number of jaw movement during chewing one bolus range from 50–80 usually but depending on feedstuff can vary from 20 to 400 chews (McLeod and Smith, 1989; Melin et al., 2007; Rombach et al., 2018). The times that the bolus is chewed and the number of jaw movement is relatively stable and constant for an individual. Increasing of fiber content in ratio is resulting in increasing number of chews per bolus and in faster chewing (Beauchemin and Buchanan-Smith, 1989; McLeod and Smith, 1989; Moon et al., 2004). Frequency of chewing while...
feeding is more erratic and varies from 10–70 chews per minute, slower is at the beginning and at the end of the ruminating period (Melin et al., 2007). Chewing activity and its automatic monitoring for the dairy cattle management is widely used in recent years (Elischer et al., 2013; Tani et al., 2013; Ambriz-Vilchis et al., 2015; Liboreiro et al., 2015; Pahl et al., 2015; Reiter et al., 2018; Rombach et al., 2018). Because use for management purposes the stability of chewing while the ruminating in cows without changes in health or reproductive status is very important. Aim of present study was evaluate a change and interindividual stability of rumination characteristic in dairy cattle after composition change of TMR between the first month after calving (TMR 1) and the fourth month after calving (TMR 2).

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

#### Animals, Housing and Experimental Design

The study was carried out at the Agri-coop Kočín at Šterusy Farm (Piešťany District, Trnava Region, Slovakia). The farm has 700-cow Red Holstein milking herd. All procedures related to animals were performed in accordance with guidelines of the Slovak University of Agriculture Ethics Committee. Twenty-eight multiparous Red Holstein dairy cows were used for experiment (mean parity 3.04 ± 1.036, mean age at beginning of experiment 1592.39 ± 406.733 days). Primiparous cows were not included because of difference in rumination pattern. Cows were housed in healthy, without any metabolic diseases, claw, leg or reproduction problems. Cows were housed in one stall in the same pen. There were 3 water troughs in the pen, forage was offered at feed table. Cows were fed a corn silage TMR once a day for ad libitum consumption. Behavior observation was performed twice, the first observation was in the first month after calving (mean DIM 19.68 ± 1.124) and the second observation in the fourth month after calving (mean DIM 104.64 ± 3.654). Composition of TMR1 was different from TMR2. TMR2 had higher content of roughage (Tab. I).

#### Data Collection

Three rumination characteristics were evaluated: length of one bolus (single rumination period SRP), number of jaw movements (JM) during one SRP and frequency of jaw movements (FJM) during rumination. Ruminating activity was observed by the direct visual observation method after morning feeding, between 8.00am – 10.00am. Observer was positioned outside the pen. Before the first live recording was trained for recognition and observation of rumination. For each cow 30 SRPs were recoded. The SRP starts with the regurgitation bolus and ends with the swallowing. The number of JM and the duration was recorded for each the SRP. The duration of the SRP was recorded manually by the stopwatches. The FJM was calculated from the recorded number of JM and the duration of the SRP.

#### Statistical Analysis

The mean values from 30 records of the SRPs were calculated for each dairy cow. All statistical analysis was carried out using the mean values. Effect of the parity to rumination characteristics in the dairy cows was tested by using the Univariate Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Difference among the cows at different parity was not found and the parity was disregarded in all other analysis. Difference in rumination characteristics between first and fourth month after calving was tested by the Paired Samples t-Test. Intra-individual stability of the rumination characteristic in first and fourth month after calving was evaluated by Pearson correlation coefficient. All statistical calculations were performed using IBM SPSS 20.

#### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The average duration of the SRP in cows fed TMR1 was 53.97 sec, SD = 8.241 sec. The average number of JM was 61.0 ±10.674. As was expected, because change of roughage in TMR2, the average duration of the SRP in cows fed TMR2 was longer and number of JM was higher (57.57 ±6.290 sec and 65.99 ±9.682 JM). The rumination characteristics recorded in present paper are similar as reported in published studies as well as changes in SRP and JM between TMR1 and TMR2 (Beauchemin and Buchanan-Smith, 1989; McLeod and Smith, 1989; Moon et al., 2004; Melin et al., 2007). Differences in duration of rumination the SRP as well as number JM were statistically different (SRJ t = -4.829

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### Table I: Composition of TMR in first month and TMR in fourth month after calving in kg per cow per day

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Alfalfa hay</th>
<th>Corn silage</th>
<th>Alfalfa silage</th>
<th>Beet pulp</th>
<th>CCM</th>
<th>WDDG</th>
<th>Soya HP</th>
<th>Rapsesed cake</th>
<th>Calcitic limestone</th>
<th>Concentrate</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Energy [MJ*day⁻¹]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TMR 1</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>111.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TMR 2</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>48.5</td>
<td>164.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CCM – corn cob mix, WDDG – wheat dried distillers grain. TMR was top-dressed with molasses at feeding table.
1: Correlation rumination characteristics between TMR1 and TMR2
P < 0.001, JM t = -6.846 P < 0.001). Frequency of chewing is dependent on SRP and JM so the average FJM was slightly changed between TMR1 and TMR2 (average FJM 67.70 ±4.916 JM per minute and 68.73 ±5.754 JM per minute respectively). Because relatively small change in FJM (1.5%) in comparison with changes in SRP (8.2%) and JM (6.7%) difference in FJM is not statistically significant (t = -1.973, P > 0.05). Similar changes in frequency of chewing with changes in roughage content suggest Beauchemin and Buchanan-Smith (1989), McLeod and Smith (1989), Melin et al. (2007), Moon et al. (2004) and Tani et al. (2013). The rumination characteristics and its change in individual cows was relative stable between TMR1 and TMR2, accordant with Beauchemin and Buchanan-Smith (1989), McLeod and Smith (1989) and Moon et al. (2004). Correlation SRP, JM and FJM between TMR1 and TMR 2 was higher than 0.886 (Fig. 1).

CONCLUSION
Change in TMR composition brings change in behavior during rumination. Highest content of roughage in TMR leads to lengthening of duration of rumination of bolus as well as to increasing number of jaw movements during ruminating one bolus. Number of jaw movements per minute is not affected and seem to be intra-individual stable. Despite changes in rumination behavior, inter-individual difference is relative stable. It can be concluded frequency of rumination can be used for management use as one of measure together with length of rumination periods.

Acknowledgements
Presented work was supported by grants VEGA 1/0724/16 and KEGA 015SPU-4/2019.

REFERENCES


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