

Project title: Application of alternative medicine in organic dairy herds with special emphasis on the effect of veterinary homeopathy on udder health

Name: Elisabeth Christine Fossing
University: Royal Agricultural and Veterinary University, Denmark
Department: Department of Pathobiology
Supervisor: Stig Milan Thamsborg and Mette Vaarst (DIAS)
Timescale: 1st November 2001-30th November 2004 (inc. 7mths leave)
E-mail/phone: Christine.Fossing@agrsci.dk / +45 89 99 13 33
Master's degree: Diploma of Veterinary Science, RVAU

Background

The use of alternative treatment types within conventional and organic cattle farming is increasing. Within the organic milk farming industry there is much attention towards alternative treatment, which is expected to be intensified after the EU regulation No. 1804/1999 has been implemented in Denmark. According to the EU regulation diseases must be treated with alternative medicine (phyto therapeutic products, homoeopathic solutions or trace elements) when these are effective in the treatment of the species and condition in question.

There is a very limited knowledge concerning how the alternative treatment types affect the general health condition in the single herd in both the short and the long term. Health management with the use of alternative treatment methods makes other demands to the cattle farmer than traditional biomedical treatment. An effective use of alternative treatment is not only about the effect on cases. It is important to consider the treatment taking in the full health management concept and to obtain an effective dialogue between veterinarian, cattle farmer and the control system.

Objective

The aim of the project is to assess how the use of alternative treatment types in organic dairy cattle herds affects the udder health on individual and herd level. The relationship between the individual cattle farmer's choice of therapy and the relationship between therapy and management strategy will be examined. The individual cattle farmer's need for decision support when using alternative treatment will be analysed.

Progress - 2004

Most of 2004 has been taken up with leave. Current activity centers on writing of the thesis and submission of publications.

Plans - 2005

The PhD defence is expected to take place December 2004 – January 2005