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Title of the presentation

The role of recording and evaluating calf traits for improved sustainability

Presenter: Michelle Axford, Agriculture Victoria, Australia
E-mail: michelle.axford@agriculture.vic.gov.au

Session: Sustainability in the context of animal recording

Authors: Michelle Axford Jennie Pryce

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ABSTRACT

In a grazing system, about one-quarter of the costs associated with rearing dairy heifers are incurred between birth and weaning. In addition, the risk of mortality is considerably higher during this period which influences farm profitability as well as consumer attitudes towards the dairying industry. Genetic tools, such as estimated breeding values, can contribute towards improved outcomes for calves and easier calving routines for farmers. Stillbirth, heifer livability are two established examples of calf traits. Acknowledging the astute ability of calf rearers to differentiate between calves that are easy or difficult to rear, a farmer-scored trait of calf vitality is under investigation. This study describes variation in calf vitality scores amongst a group of Australian Holstein herds. :

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