

# Milking practices of Breton dairy farmers with reduced milking intervals



BROCARD, V. (1), TROU, G. (2), GERVAIS, F. (3), MULLER, N. (3), QUEMENEUR, K. (3), FLAMENT, J. (3)

## REDUCED MILKING INTERVALS TO LIMIT DURATION OF WORKING DAYS

Milking represents 50% of the compulsory working time of dairy farmers and refrains many people from settling in dairy production. Moreover, the increase in herd size leads to a greater resort to salaried workers who do not wish to experience long "working days" on farms; that is why experiments were carried out by INRA researchers to test reduced milking intervals (MI). B. Rémond showed low effect of reduced MI on dairy production as long as they remained over 5h30min. But do the farmers apply such strategies on farms?

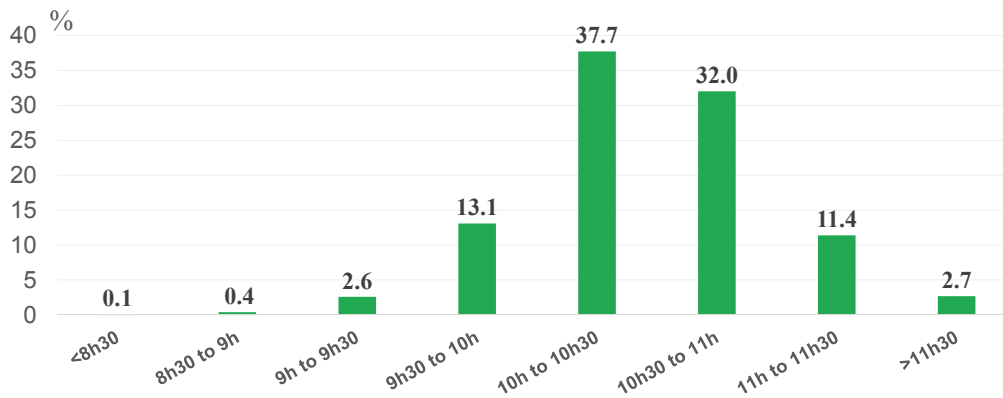
### OVER 5,800 FARMS PROVIDED THEIR MILKING TIMES

- Method: database of milking times registered on the 5,844 farms at milk performance recording in region Brittany, France, on the official control days (thanks to BCLEO and EYLIPS organizations).
- The average MI is 10 hours 23 minutes. Milking times and intervals are very "traditional" with only 0,1% of farms below 8 hours 30 minutes of milking intervals. Half of the farmers start milking between 7 am and 8 am, and between 5 pm and 6 pm.

Table 1: Milking practices (on the official control days)

Milk performance control bodies	EYLIPS and BCLEO (France)
<b>Number of farms</b>	<b>5,844</b>
<b>Average milking times</b> morning / evening	<b>7 : 25 am / 5 : 45 pm</b>
<b>Milking interval</b> Average morning-evening Between 10 and 11 hours Below or equal to 9 hours	<b>10 h 23 min</b> <b>69.7%</b> <b>1.2% (68 farms)</b>

Figure 1: Distribution of milking intervals between morning and evening milking (%).



### A RELUCTANCE TO CHANGE MILKING TIMES AND INTERVALS

- An enquiry was made using the 68 farms below or equal to 9h of MI to describe farmers' motivations for "shorter" intervals. The motivations for more flexible milking times (shorter intervals, but also once a day milking, no milking on Sunday evenings...) are the following: 1/ more time for family, and 2/ the presence of a salaried worker for milking. The main restraint for changing appears to be related to fears around animal welfare or udder health. This study shows the reluctance of farmers to decrease their MI and change their practices, and underlines the need for further experiments and communication around milking intervals.

#### References

Remond B., Pomiès D., Julien C., Pradel P., 2006. Renc. Rech.Rum., (13), 365-368

Many thanks to JP. Abiven (BCLEO) and S. Brétéché (EYLIPS) for their involvement.

- (1) Institut de l'Élevage, UMT Riel, BP 85225, 35652 Le Rheu Cdx, France
- (2) Pôle Herbivores Chambres d'Agriculture de Bretagne, CS 74223 35042 Rennes Cdx, France
- (3) Agrocampus Ouest, 65 Rue de Saint-Brieuc, 35000 Rennes, France

Contact: [valerie.brocard@idele.fr](mailto:valerie.brocard@idele.fr)

