Discrepancy between expected and actual benefits of automatic heat detectors in commercial dairy herds.

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Context and question

- **Automatic heat detectors (AHD): one of the « first » PLF devices (number, commercialisation),**
- **Which have answered to expressed expectations of farmers**

Do the farmers get what they expected ?

→ **Decision-making tools**

Materials and methods : semi-directive survey

1- Identification of farms:

32 commercial dairy farms within 2 lists provided by advisors,
To enhance the diversity (pedo-climatic characteristics, breed, size, yield/cow, milking system, AHD system…).

From West (oceanic climate, plain) to East (low mountain)

Bretagne

Jura (Doubs)

Diversity of systems

	Number of dairy cows	Milk yield (kg/cow/y)	Milking system	
			Classic	AMS
Bretagne	30 to 135	7 000 to 10 400	10/20	10/20
Jura	39 to 194	6000 to 11 800	10/12	2/12

1 to 8 partners 0 to 100% grass Standard or PDO (Comté) production

Reproduction:

Calving period > 6 months

AI only (18)
AI + Bull (14)

Visual detection

Materials and methods: semi-directive survey

1- Identification of farms

2- Interview guide

• **Which motivations?**	**Why?**
• How do you make the choice?	What?
• **How do you use the AHD?**	**How?**
• **Which satisfaction and benefits?**	**So?**

Materials and methods : semi-directive survey

1- Identification of farms

2- Interview guide

3- Interviews

Systematic recording.

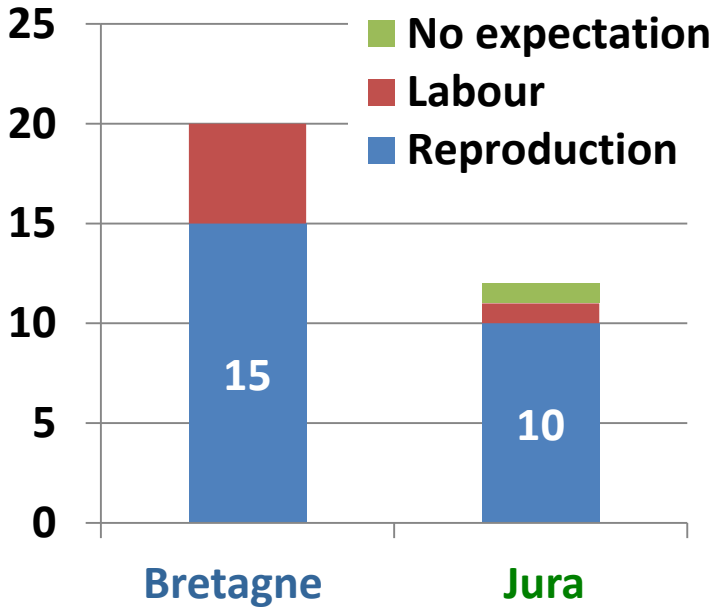
First step: spontaneous expression; second step: proposition of items.

≈1h30/interview

4- Qualitative treatment of interviews

Why?

- Mainly to increase detection and/or reproduction performances
- Especially when sexed semen was used (16/25)



Consistent with the speeches of companies

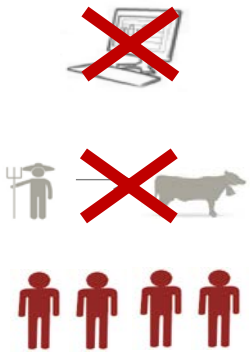
[*Better heat detection leads to higher pregnancy rates and fewer open days; saves drug costs; saves on observation, pregnancy checks and hormone treatments*]

How? From AHD alert to service: various practices, from delegation to security

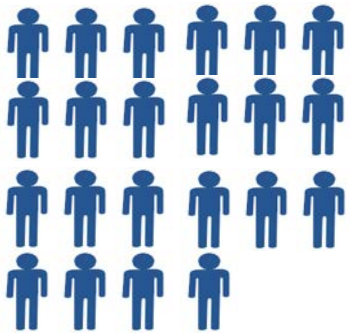
Alert

Confirmation?

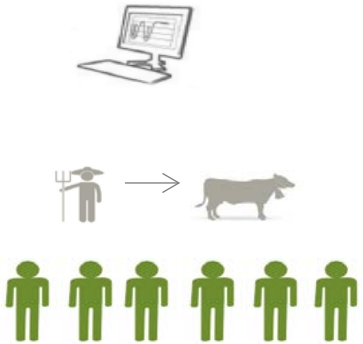
Delegation



Intermediate

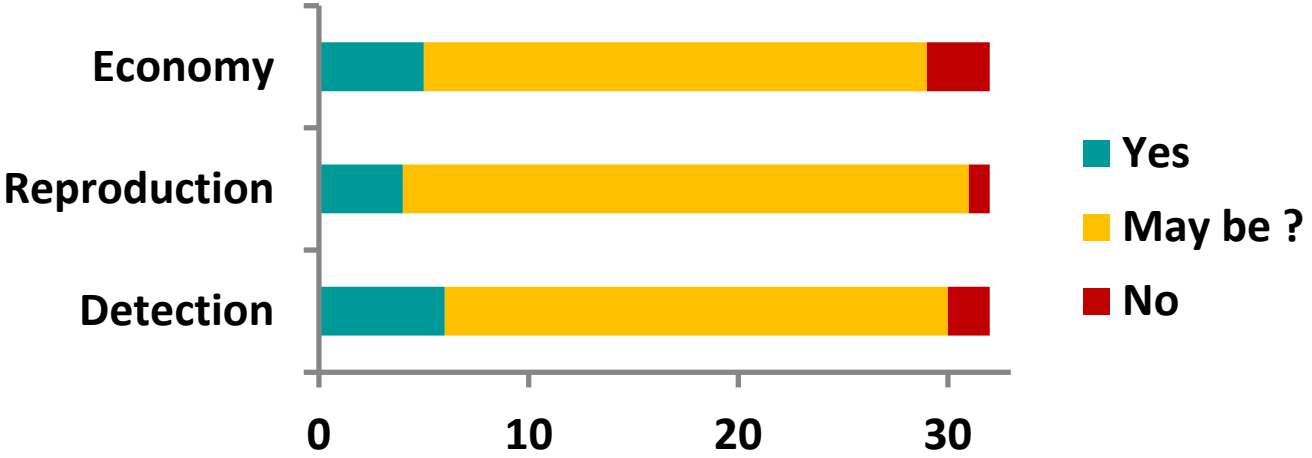


Security



So? A light felt impact on technic/economic performances

Most of them don’t really know if their device have an impact



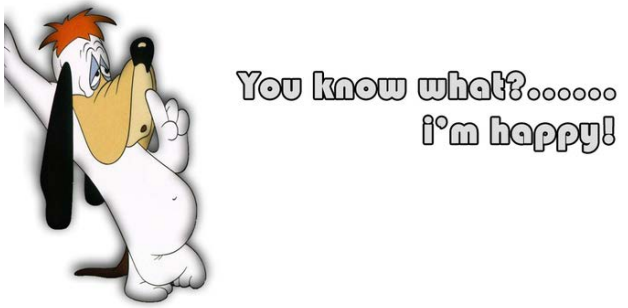
« I have the impression that » « Finally I don’t know » « Finally I don’t care »

So? A strong impact on labour comfort

Less stress but few effect on working time (5/32)

So? In short

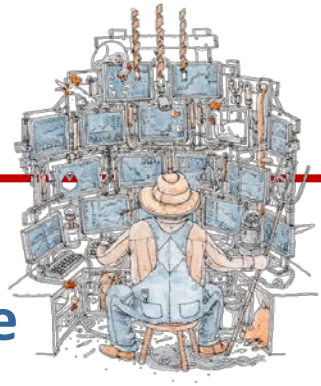
- **29/32 are satisfied (or fully satisfied) with their AHD**



- **Even though they didn't get what they expected!**

“I feel safer” “It reassures”

In conclusion



- AHD is a good example of convenient and easy to use PLF device.
- There is a discrepancy between expected and actual benefits of AHD
- Comfort in their labour, and not only working time, is one of the keys for farmer's satisfaction.

How to evaluate comfort? How to include comfort in decision-making tools?

Many thanks for your attention

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