

Calf and young stock management practices on 184 Flemish dairy farms



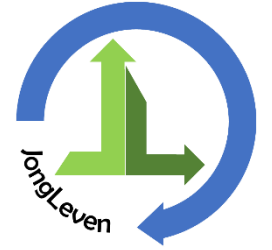
Curial, S.A., Vandaele, L and K. Goossens



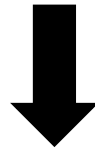
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Introduction



- **Youngstock rearing**
 - Optimal growth and calving age
 - Productive, resilient and longevous dairy herd
- **Main goal project JongLeven:**
 - Enlarge implementation of best practices during rearing period
 - Current rearing practices in Flanders are unkown



Online questionnaire



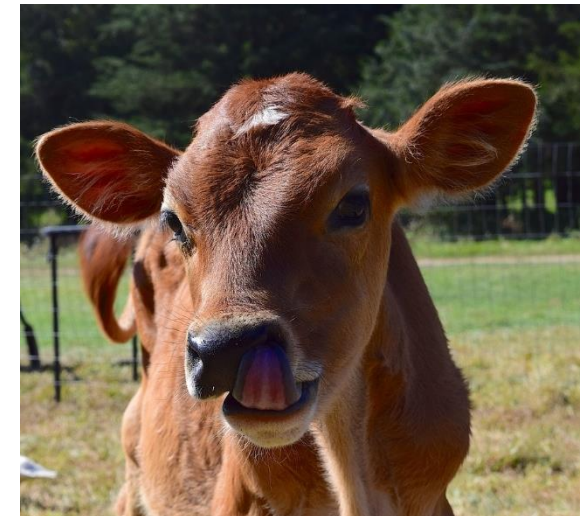
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Online questionnaire

Available for all Flemish dairy farms

50 Questions: closed, multiple choice and open

- Farm characteristics
- Colostrum management
- Weaning methods
- Feeding strategies
- Insemination
- Grazing
- Hygiene and biosecurity
- Measuring growth/registration



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Farm characteristics

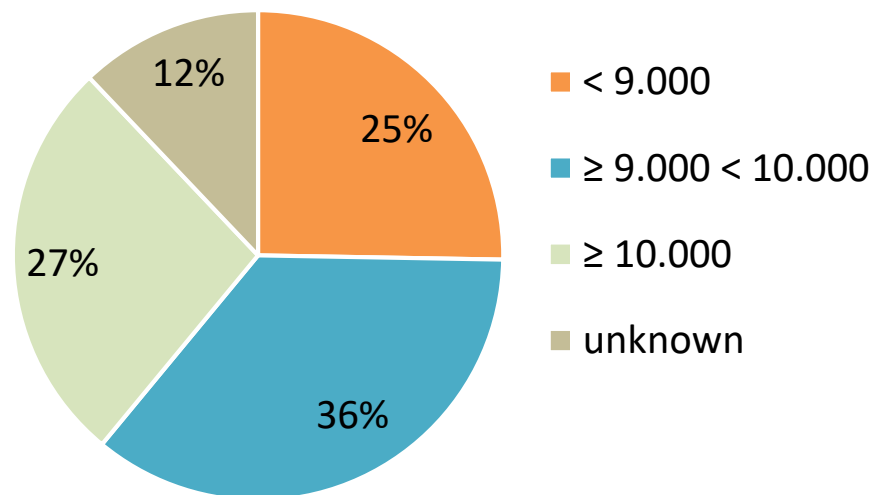
189 respondents completed the questionnaire

- 184 dairy farmers, 5 specialized in young stock rearing
- Average age at first calving: 24,9 months (ranging from 22,9 tot 33 months)

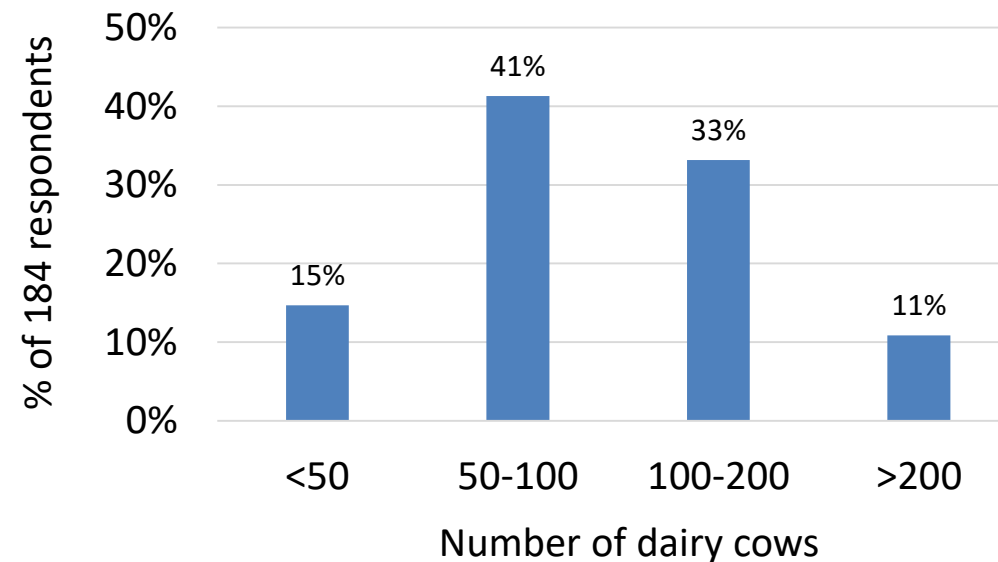


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Average annual milk production (kg/cow/year)



Size of dairy farm



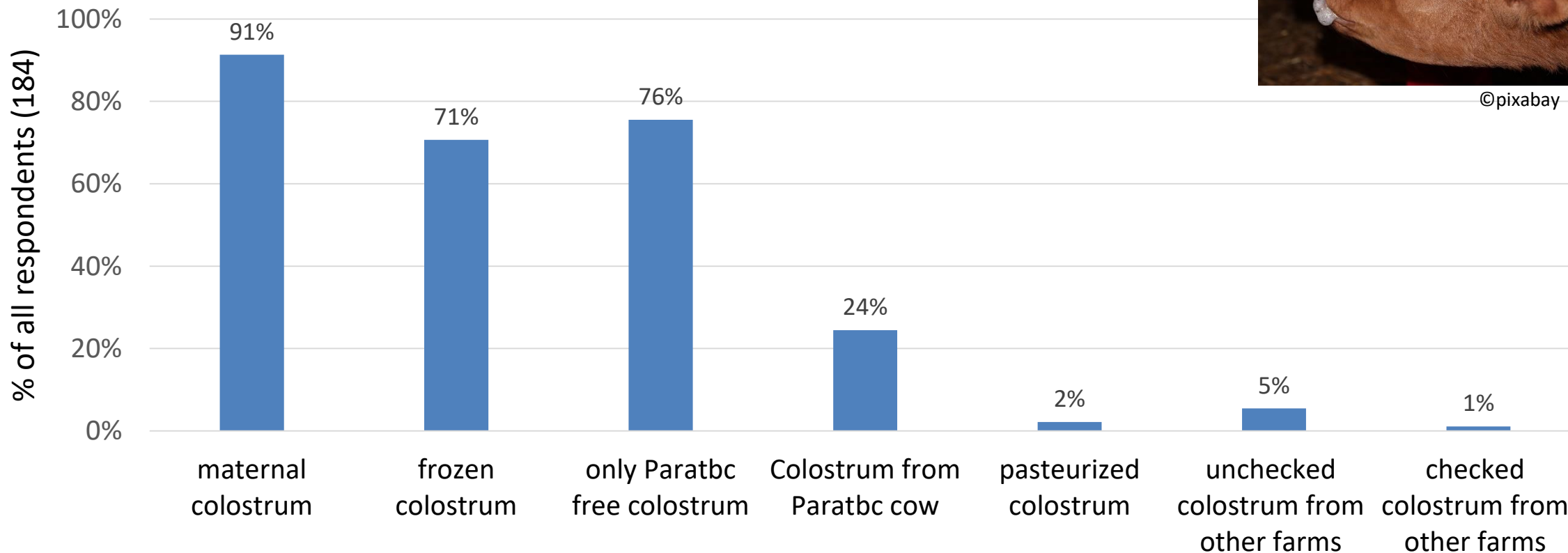
Above average performing dairy farms

Colostrum management



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Origin of administered colostrum



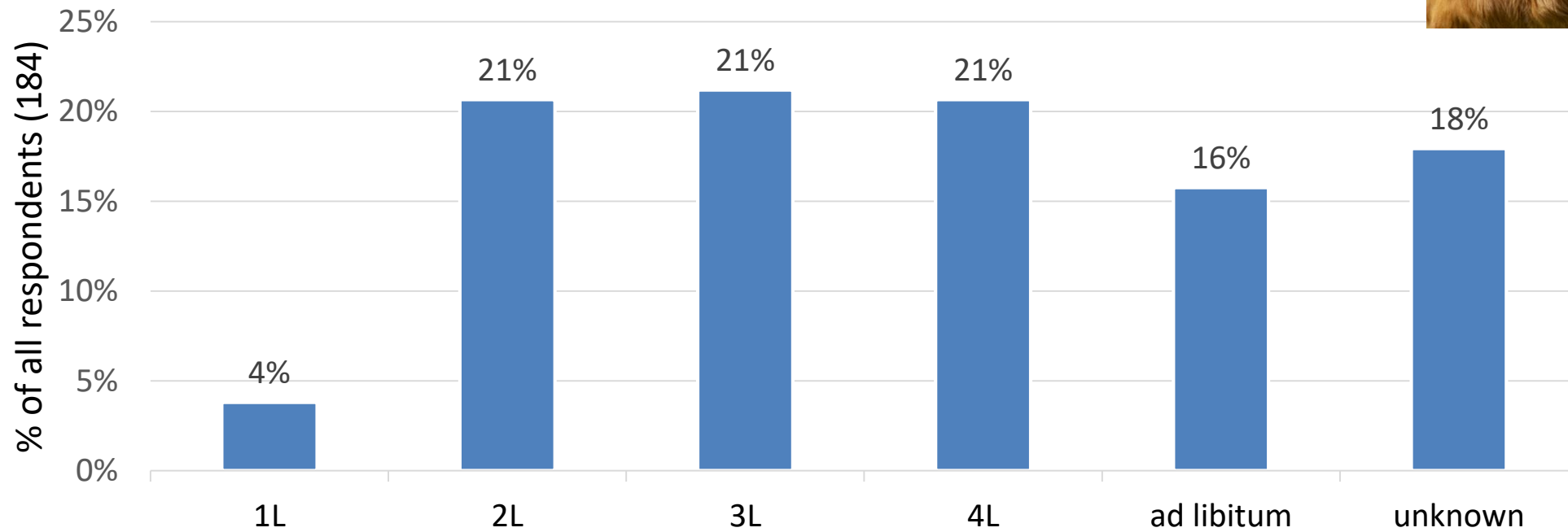
48% checks colostrum quality

Colostrum management



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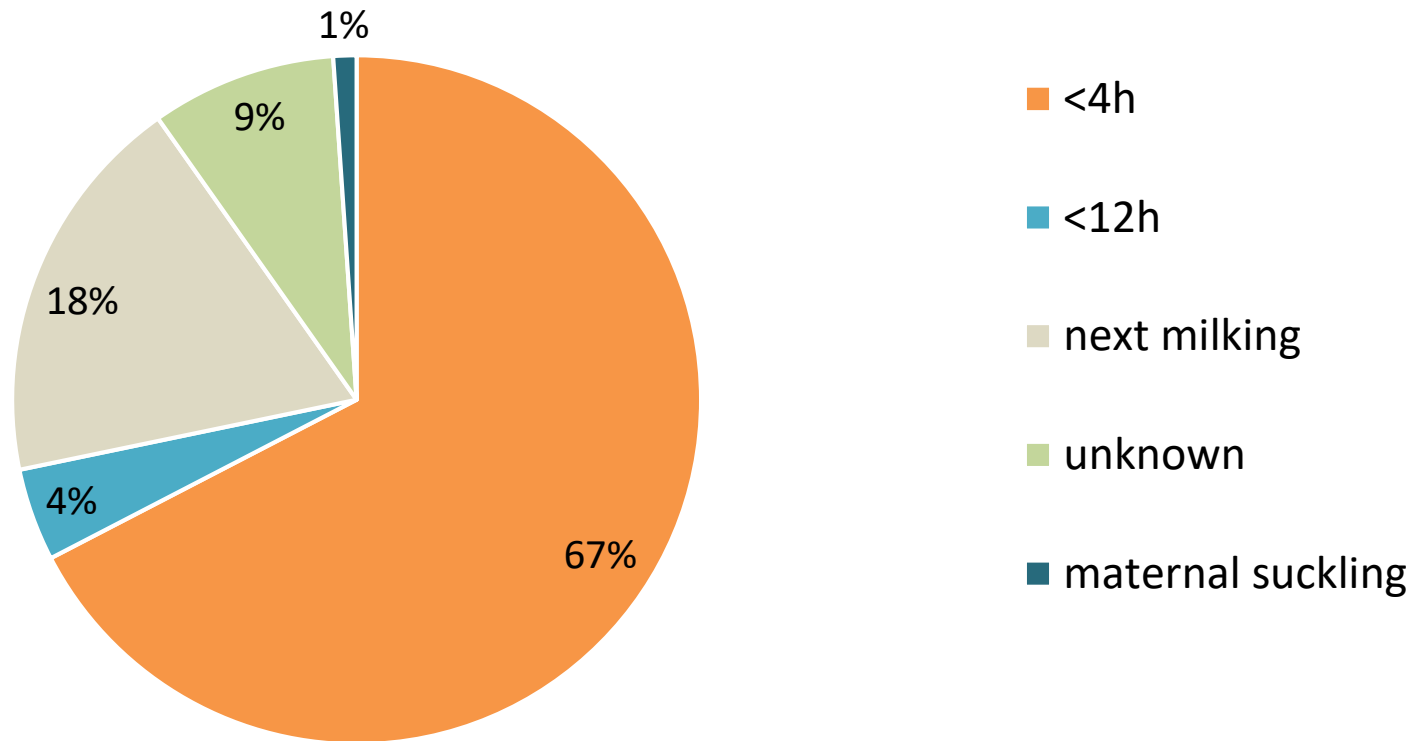
Amount of colostrum fed within the first 5h of life



Best practice: 4L within 6h

Colostrum management

Timing of colostrum collection after calving



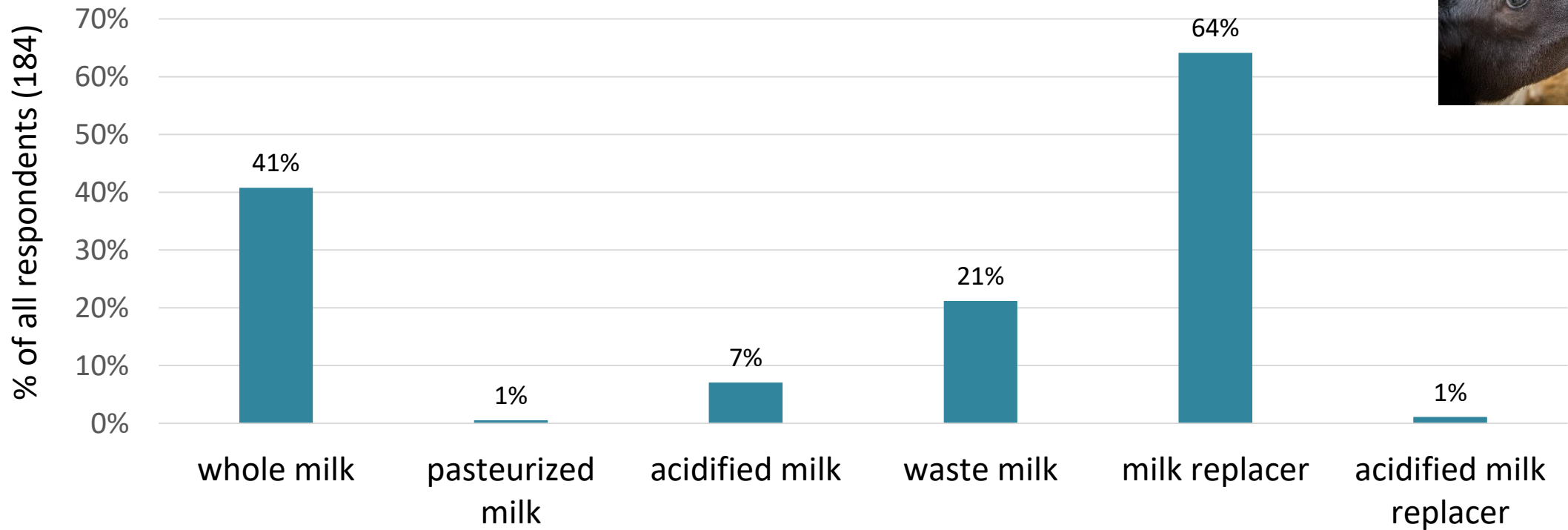
Best practice: as soon as possible



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Milk management

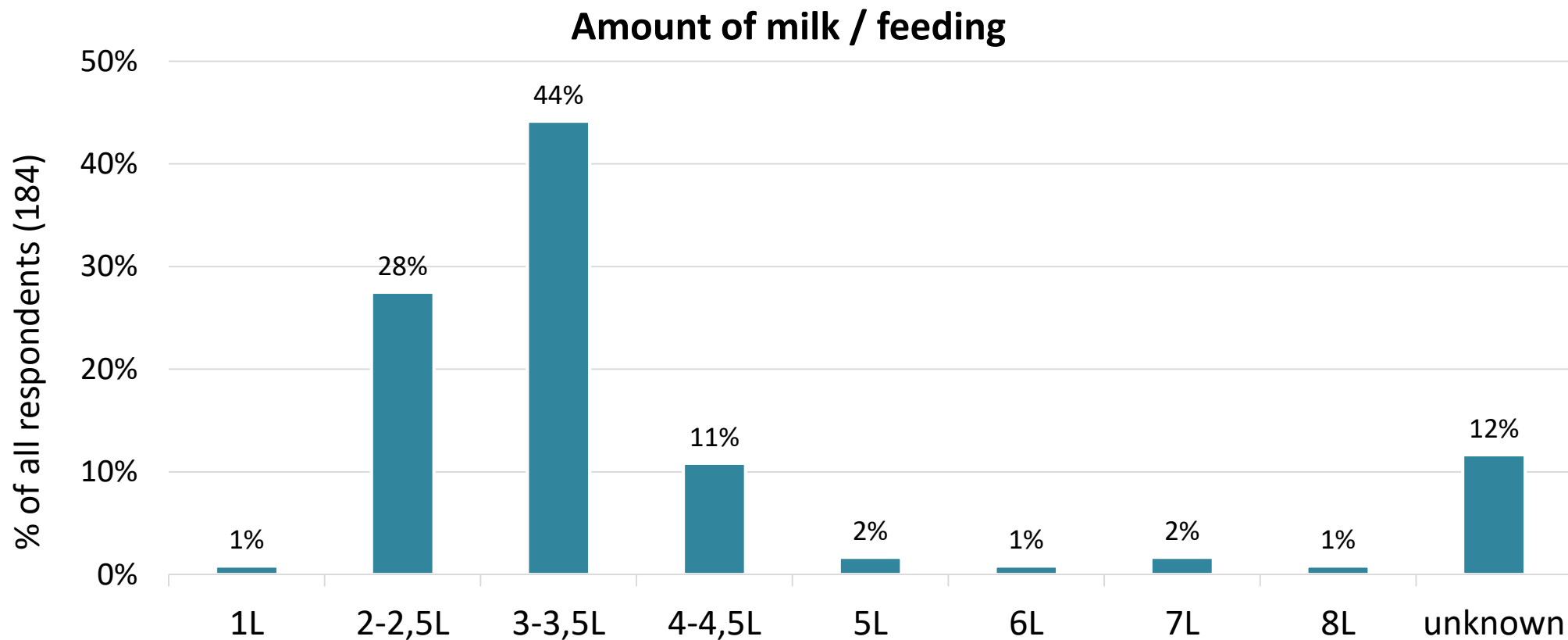
Origin of administered milk



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42% Bucket with artificial teat
38% Bucket without artificial teat
11% Combination bucket with and without artificial teat
7% Automatic feeder

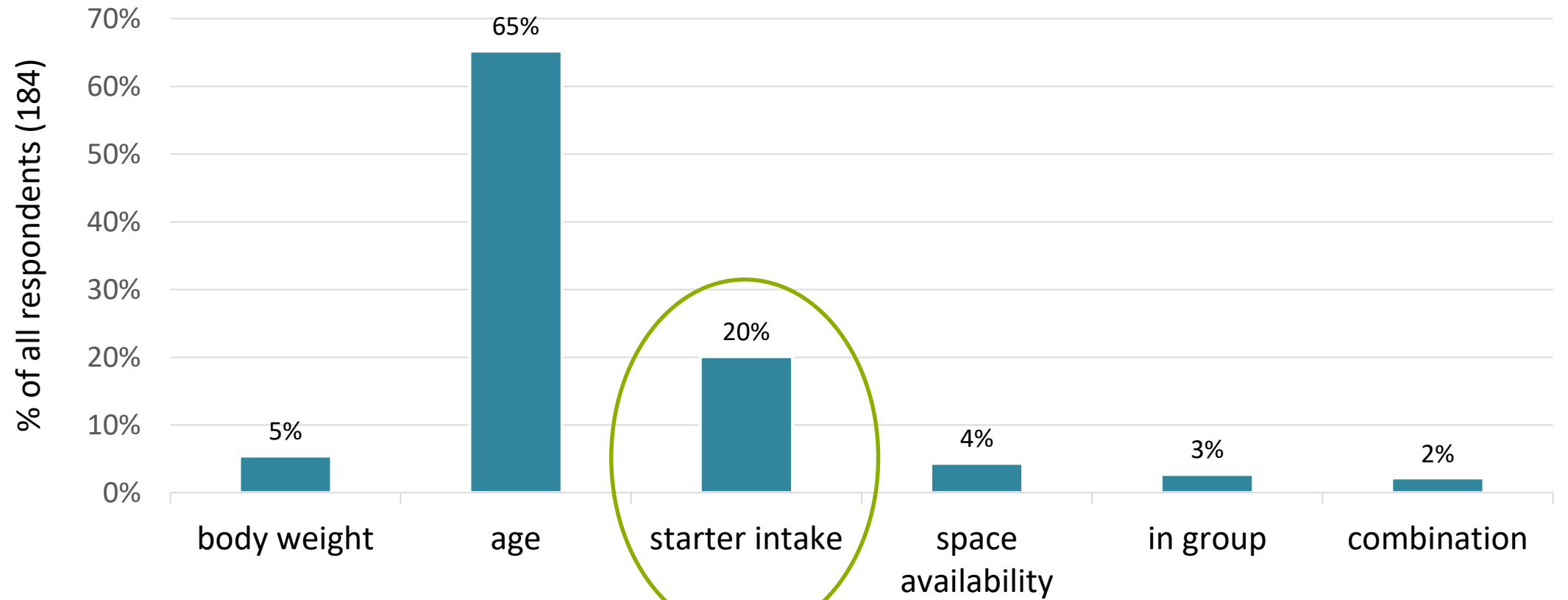
Milk management



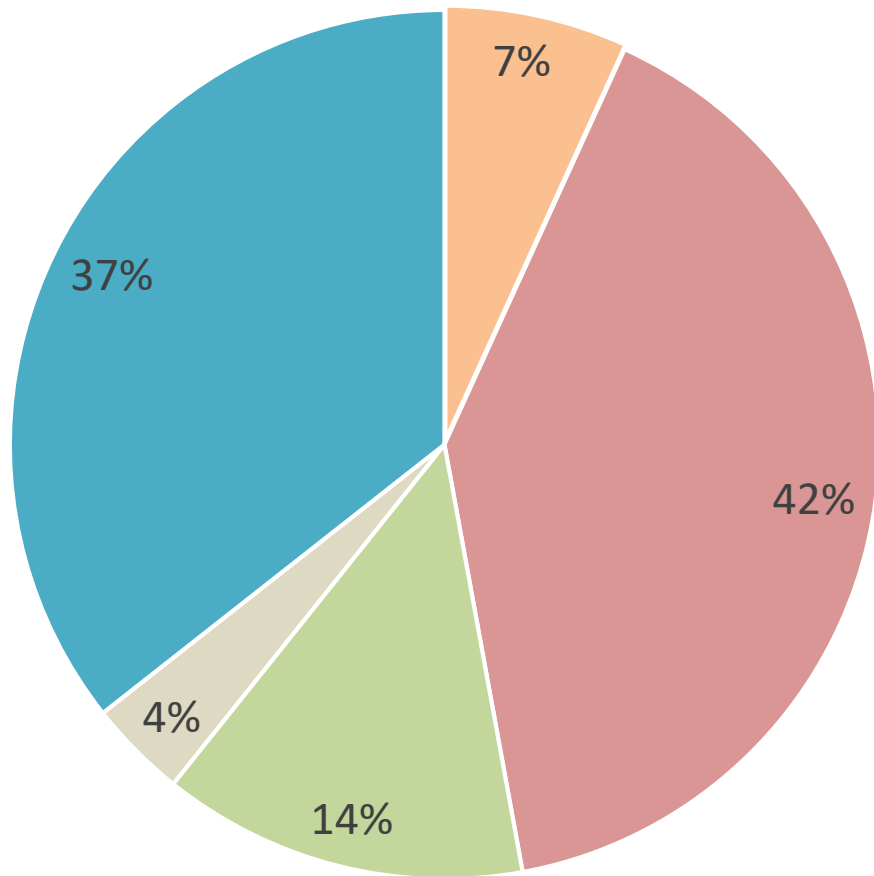
86% provides milk 2 times a day

Weaning strategy

Main factor determining weaning

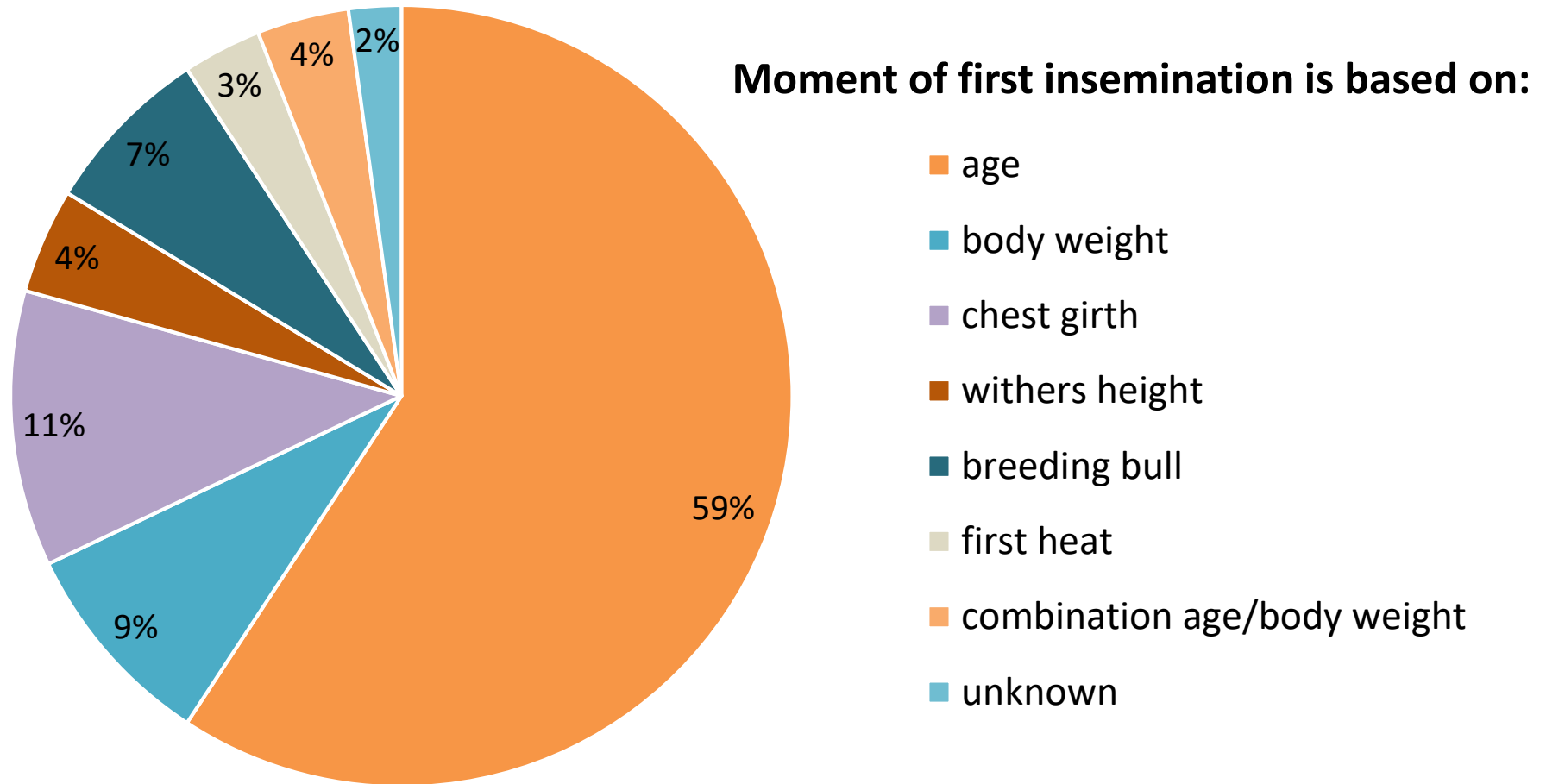


Weaning strategy



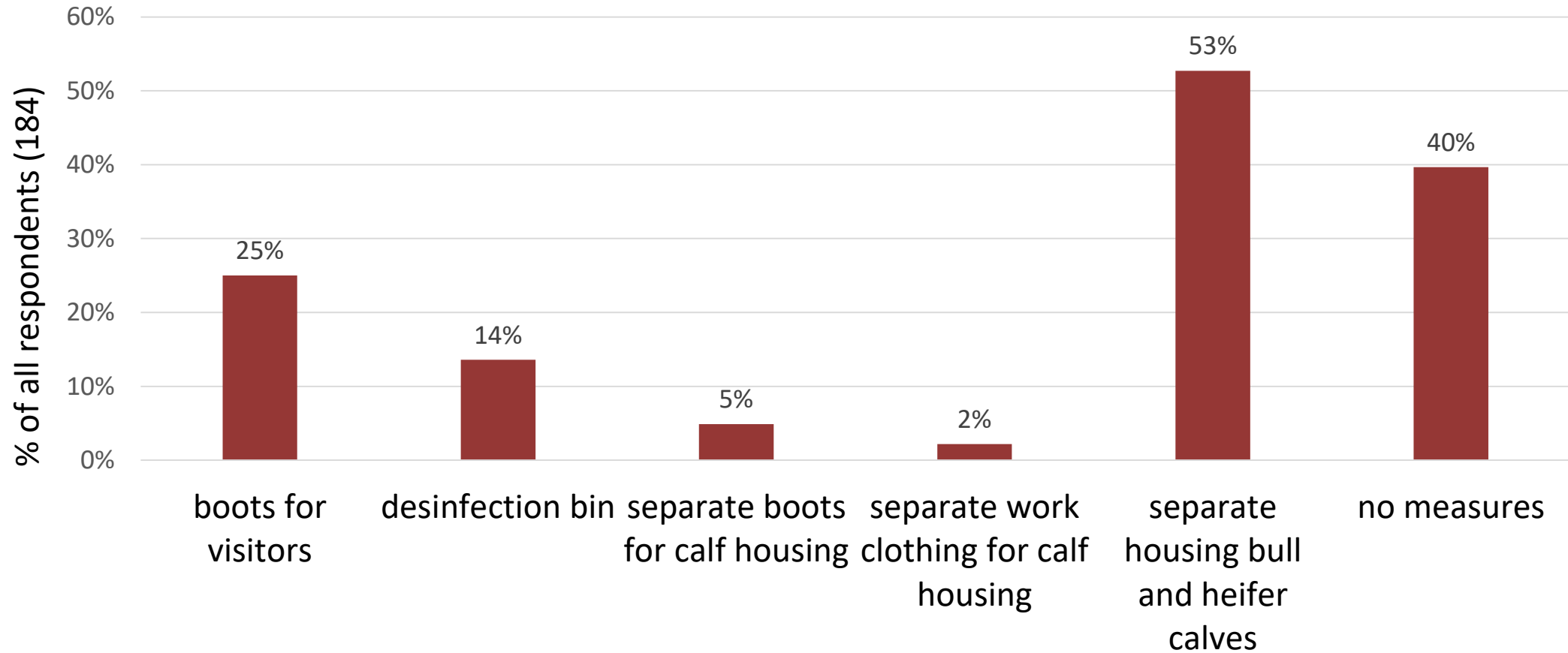
- abrupt
- reduction in milk amount
- reduction in number of feedings
- reduction in milk concentration level
- reduction in milk amount and number of feedings

First insemination



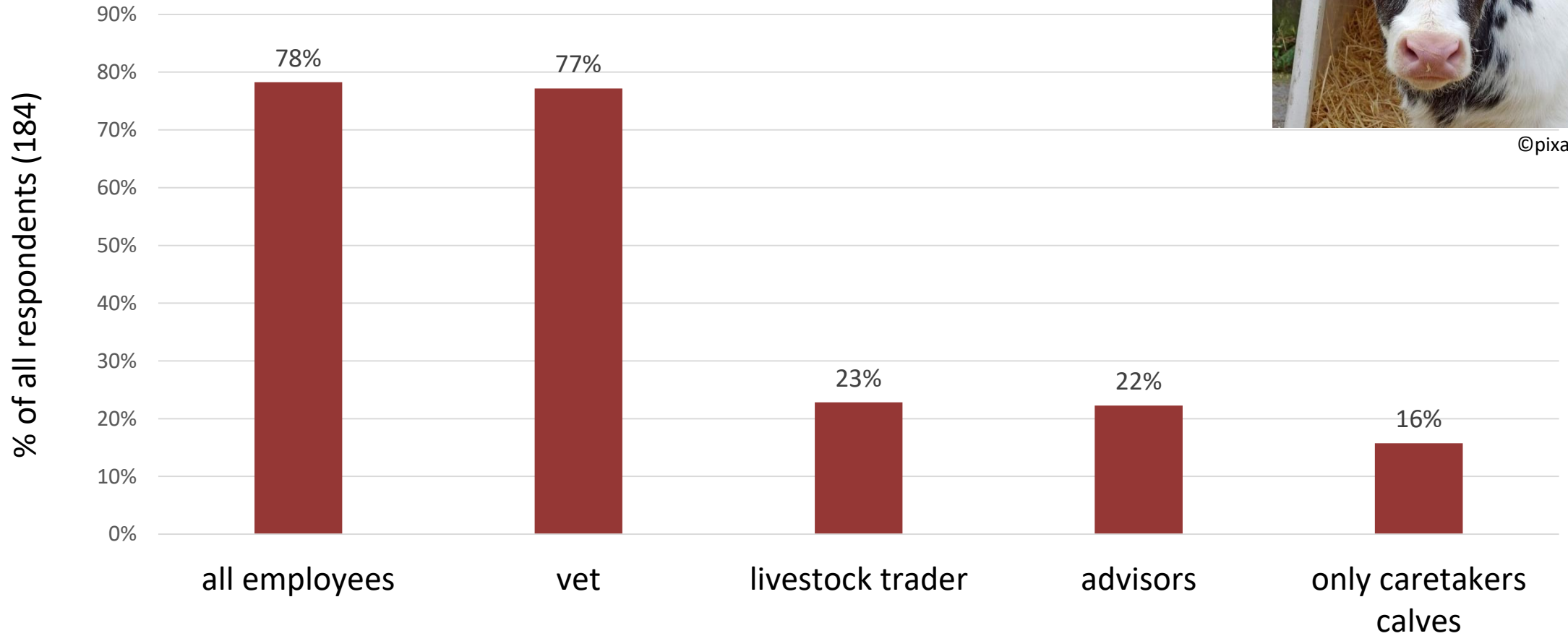
Biosecurity

Biosecurity measures for calf housing



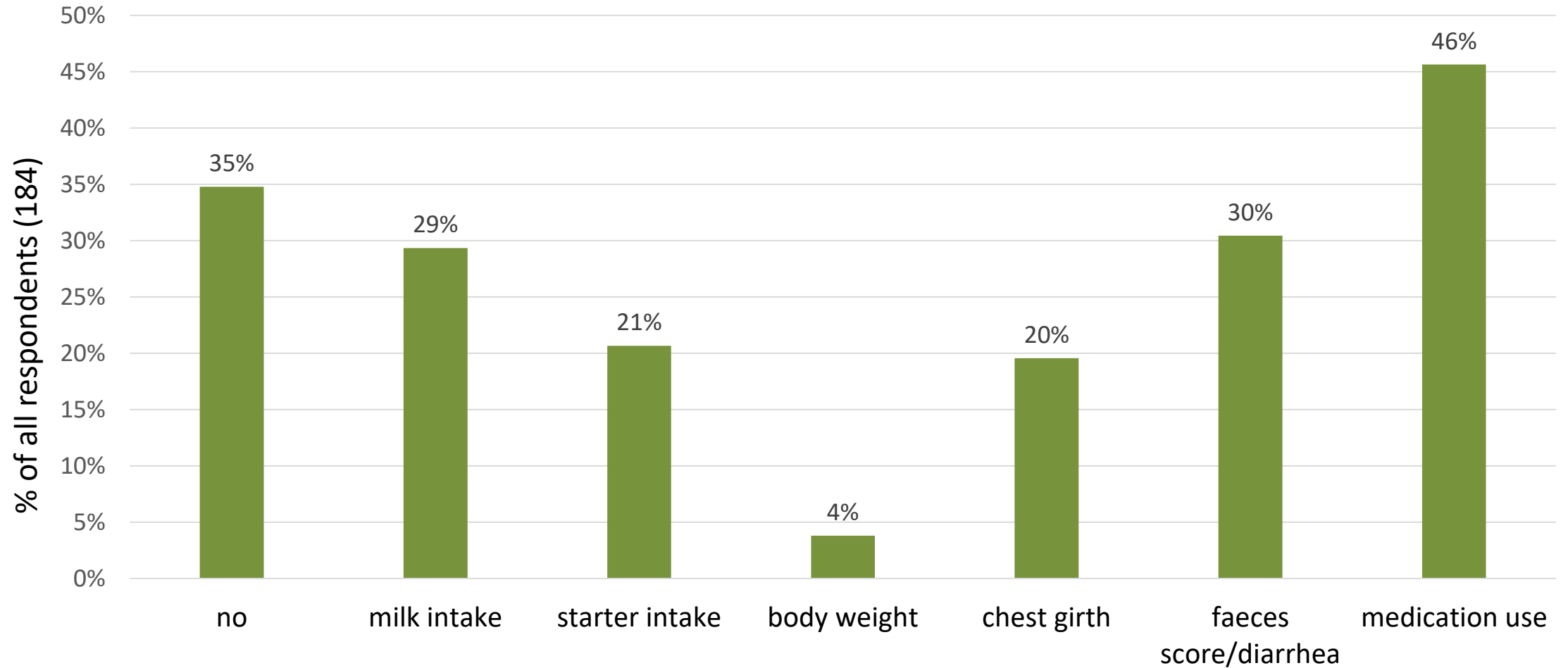
Biosecurity

Access to calf housing



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Registration of data



Age at first calving

AFC (months)	<25	>25
# of participants	127	53
Average milk production (kg/cow/year)	10019 ^a	9129 ^b
Whole milk (%)	31 ^a	57 ^b
Abrupt weaning (%)	2 ^a	21 ^b
<u>Age first insemination (months)</u>	<u>13,6^a</u>	<u>14,6^b</u>

Conclusions

Colostrum management:

- Responding dairy farmers are aware of best management practices
→ not always practically feasible (at night)
- 50% checks colostrum quality
- Colostrum of paraTBC cow is fed

Origin of milk: milk replacer, whole milk (incl. waste milk)

- Feeding 2 times a day, 2 tot 3,5L /feeding

Weaning: based on age, gradual reduction in milk amount

First insemination: based on age

Conclusions

Hygiene/biosecurity → can be improved

- Separate clothing and boots for calf housing
- Restrict access to calf housing

Monitoring calves/heifers → can be improved

- Body weight
- concentrate intake
- use of medication

Financers JongLeven



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Thank you!

Questions?



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