

PILOT STUDY TO IDENTIFY STRESS LEVEL AT COW-CALF SEPARATION AFTER A FEW DAYS OF CONTACT



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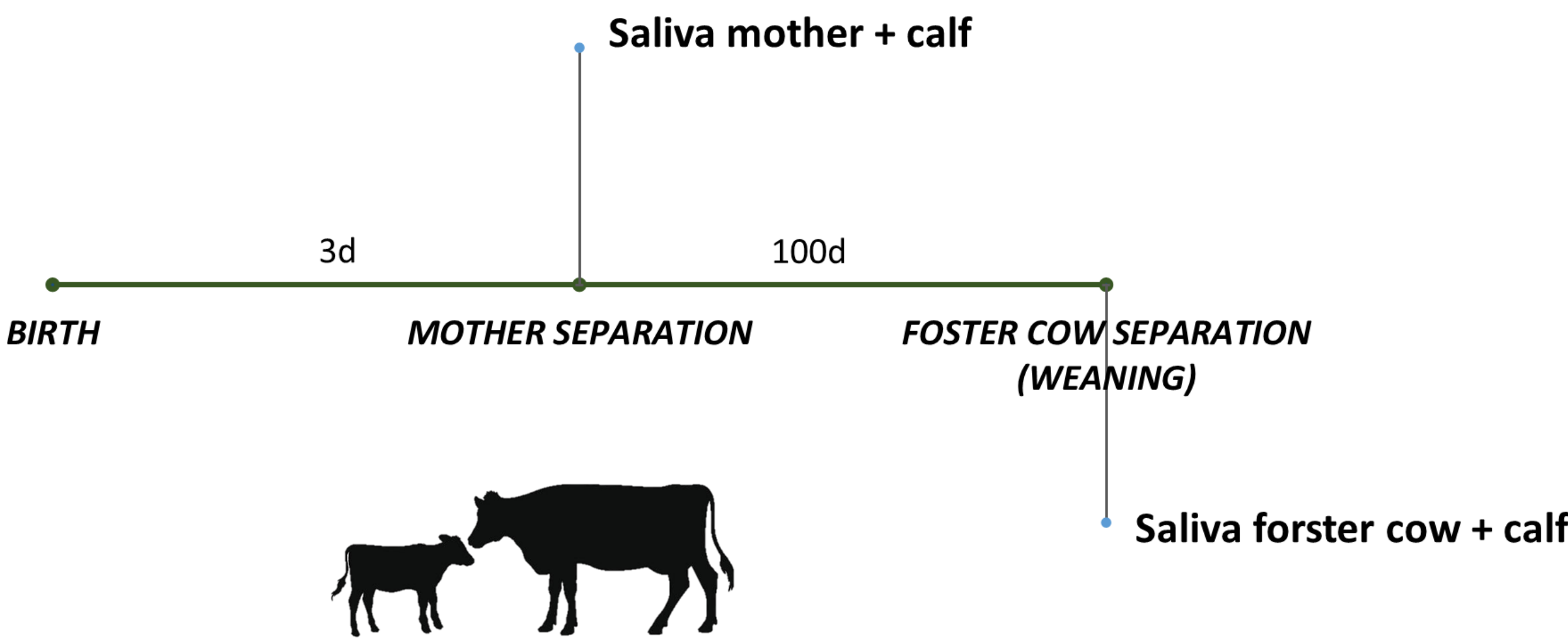
INTRODUCTION

Calves separation in intensive dairy farming is a hot topic for public opinion due to its impact on animal welfare, it is important to find alternative practices evaluating their advantages and disadvantages.



The aim of the study was to analyze the stress at separation for cows and calves at different calf age

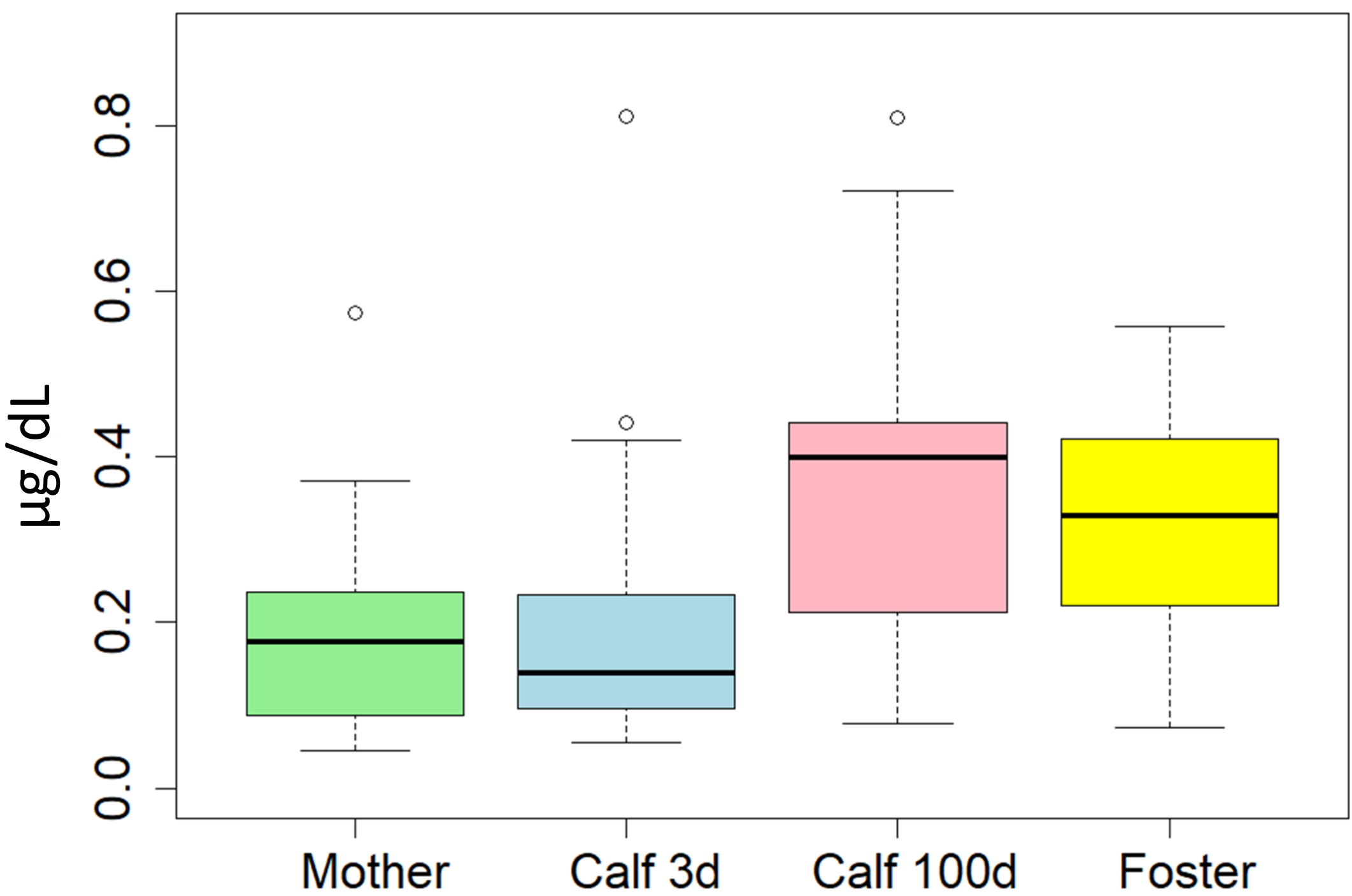
MATERIALS AND METHOD



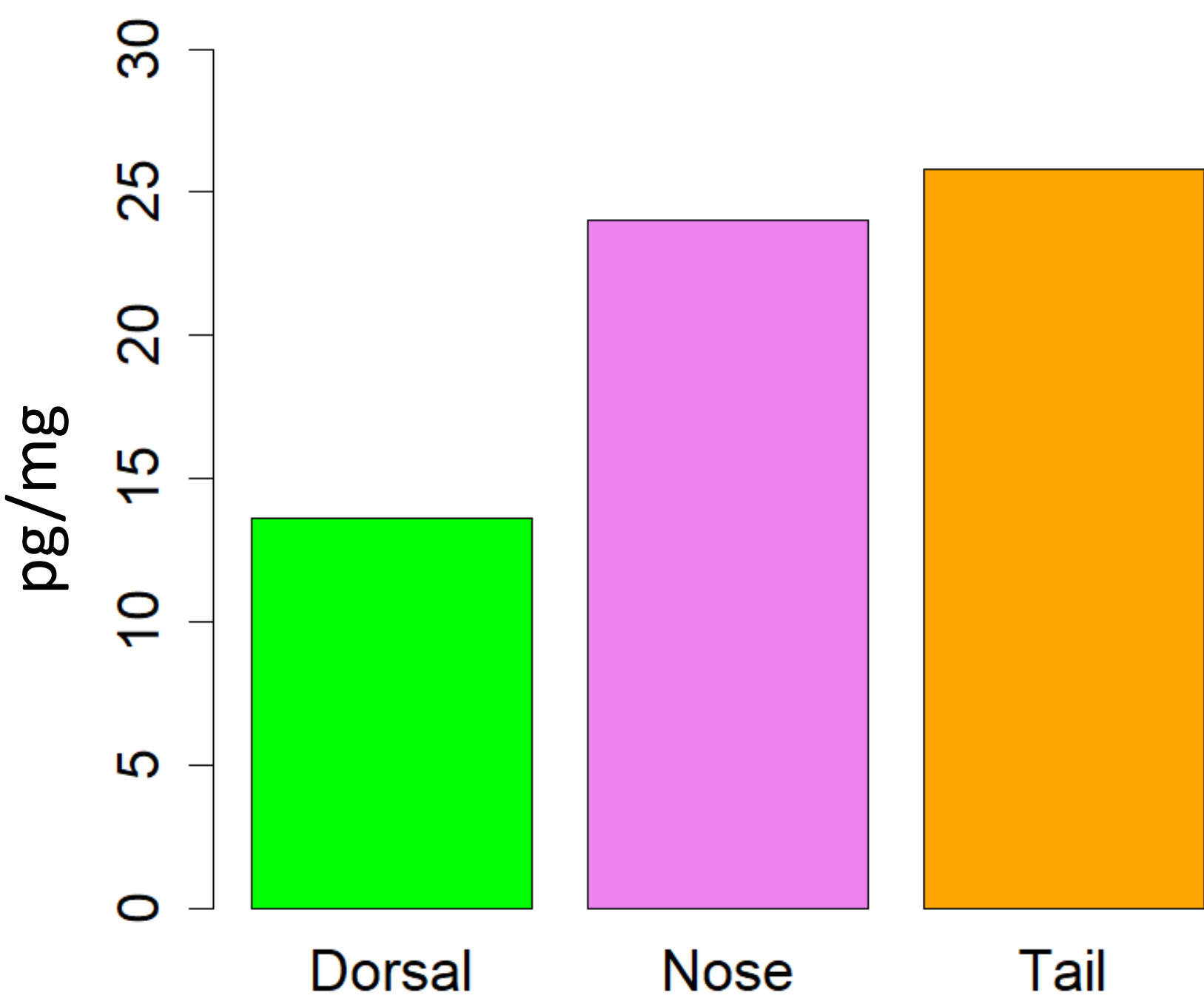
After birth calves were 3 days with their mother, than they were 100 days with a foster cow until weaning. Saliva was sampled by 16 mother at separation, 26 calves at mother separation, 13 calves at weaning, 9 foster cows at separation and cortisol concentration was analyzed with an enzyme immunoassay (Salimetrics Assay #1-3002). Also hair from tail, nose and dorsal area were sampled from 2 calves at the birth.

RESULTS

Saliva Cortisol



Hair zone



CONCLUSION

Separation after few days of cow-calf contact would seem not stresfull for calves and cows on average. In contrast separation after a long period of cow-calf contact have an increase in cortisol level after separation. This pilot study suggest that could be possible a short period of cow-calf contact without problem at separation. However is necessary further investigations since it is still an under-researched topic.

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