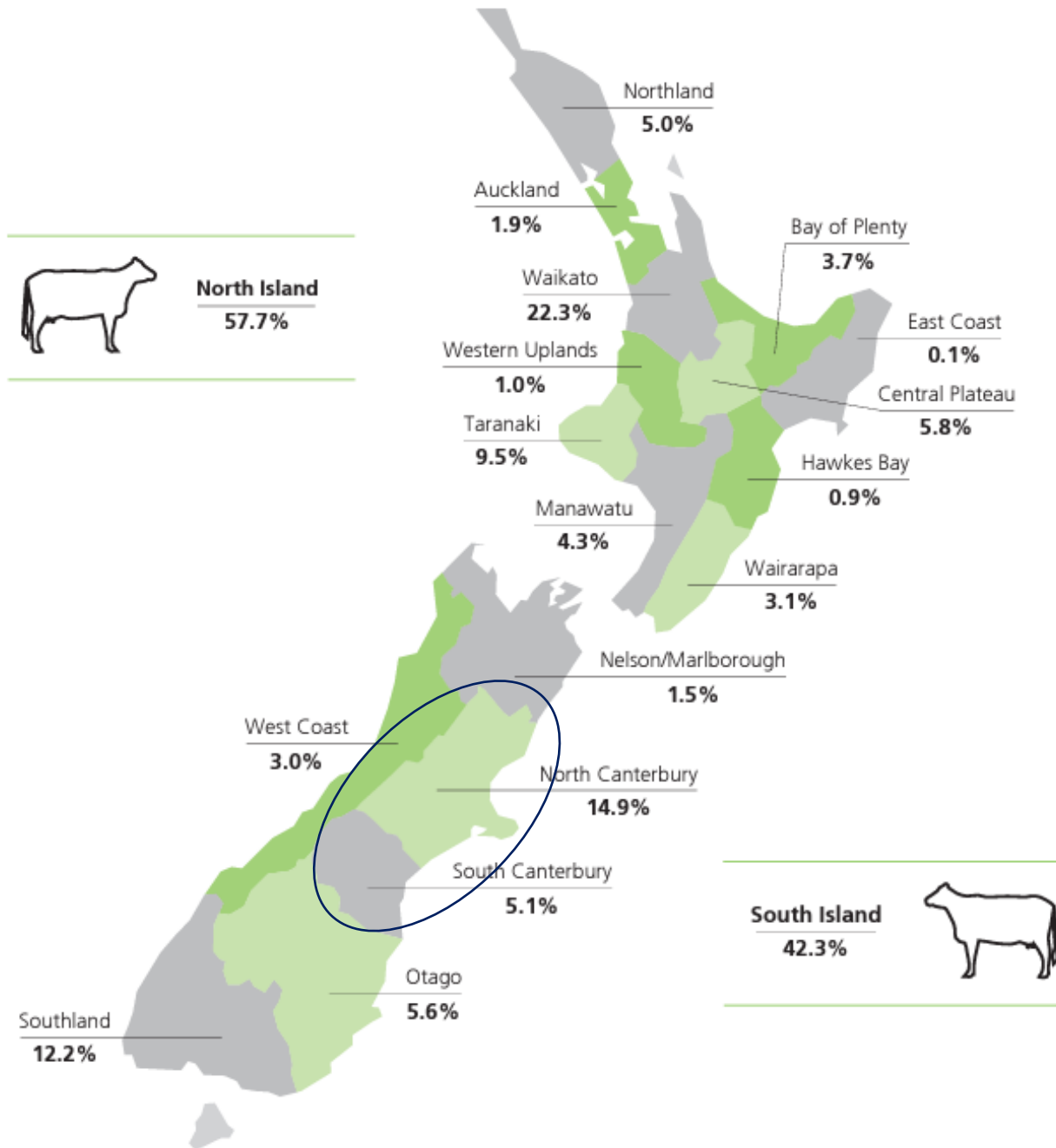


Ensuring good animal welfare in extensive farming systems: lessons from dairy farmers in Canterbury, NZ



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Dairy production in NZ (2022/23)



20.7 billion litres of milk,

containing 1.87 billion kilograms of milksolids, a 0.3% increase in milksolids from 2021/22.



4.67 million cows,

(3.46% decrease in cow numbers from 2021/22)



10,601 herds

(down by 195 from 2021/22)



441 average herd size

(down by 8 from 2021/22)

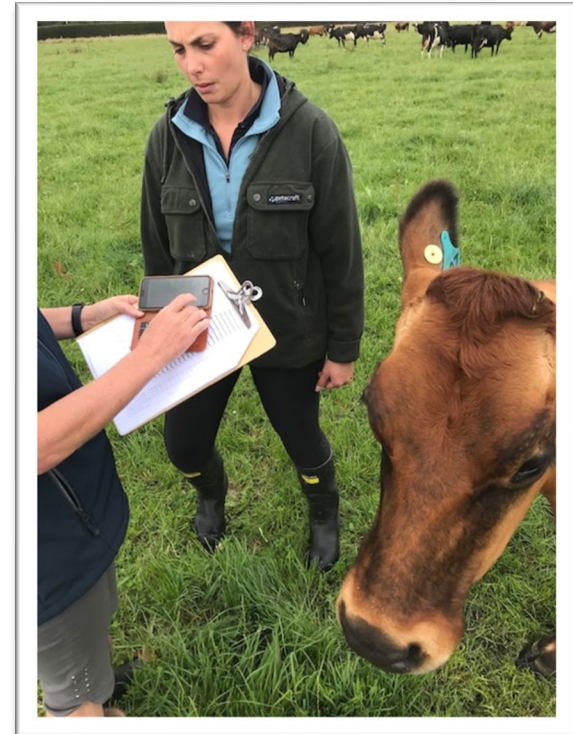
Objective

To gain insights into current practices aimed at ensuring good animal welfare in extensive farming systems



Methods

- In-person interviews with five farm managers
- Performed in March 2023
- Semi-structured interviews



Interview guide

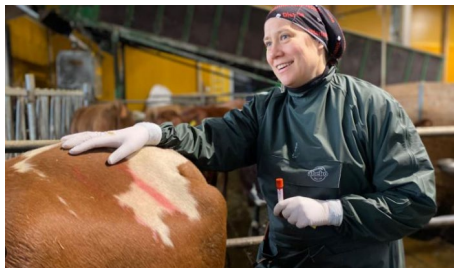
- What does animal welfare mean to you? Which parts would you include in the concept?
- Do you assess animal welfare in any way on your farm? If so, how?
- What actions have you taken to ensure good animal welfare?
- Do you see any need to further improve animal welfare on your farm?
- What are the major animal welfare problems seen in dairy production – today? In the future?
- What do you think of shade and shelter for cattle? Is it needed?
- Which factors and practices do you consider to highly influence the animal welfare level?
- What do you think dairy farmers could do to improve the welfare of dairy cattle?

Methods

- In-person interviews with five farm managers
- Performed in March 2023
- Semi-structured interviews
- Audio recorded
- Transcribed
- Thematic analysis



Identified themes

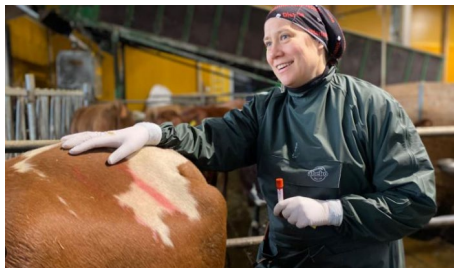


Preventive herd-health management

- Strategic grouping
- Biosecurity
- Early disease detection
- BCS
- Technological tools
- Education & communication



Identified themes



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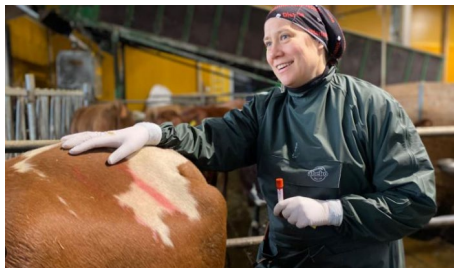


Shelter

- Hedges or sheds
- Adverse weather
- Calving
- Pugging damage
- Shade



Identified themes



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Shelter

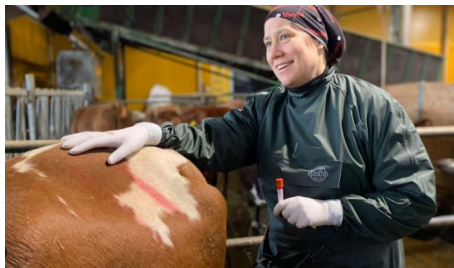
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- Pugging damage



Youngstock management

- Collection of calves
- Drenching
- Bobby calves
- Lack of market

Identified themes



Preventive herd-health management

- Strategic grouping
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Shelter

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Youngstock management

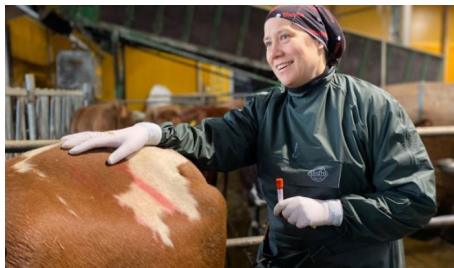
- Collection of calves
- Colostrum
- Bobby calves
- Lack of market



Handling

- Walking tracks
- Minimize stress
- Backing gate
- Employees

Identified themes



Preventive herd-health management

- Strategic grouping
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Shelter

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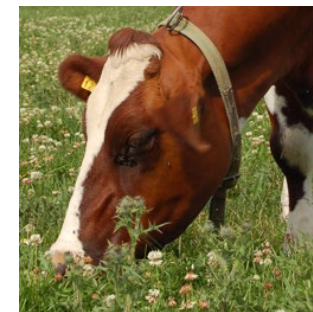
Youngstock management

- Collection of calves
- Drenching
- Bobby calves
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Handling

- Walking tracks
- Minimize stress
- Backing gate
- Employees



Feeding

- Winter grazing
- Supplements
- Crops
- Nitrogen leakage

Conclusions

- Important for all farmers with well-kept and healthy cows
- Sometimes difficult to meet societal needs
- Request for a payment system to promote high levels of animal welfare
- Enforcing practices that do not pay off?
- External effects
- Education and communication



Thank you for your attention!

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FORMAS 

The FORMAS logo consists of the word 'FORMAS' in a bold, black, sans-serif font, followed by a graphic of five colored dots (yellow, red, blue, green, and orange) arranged in a slightly curved pattern.

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