

WSN for Cattle Monitoring – Related Work and Design Proposal

Herman Lundkvist*, Attila Para[†], Vipul Mahawar[‡] and Omar Elshal[§]

*Student Id: 0973534

Email: h.e.lundkvist@student.tue.nl

[†]Student Id: 0975194

Email: a.para@student.tue.nl

[‡]Student Id: 0980015

Email: v.mahawar@student.tue.nl

[§]Student Id: 0980295

Email: o.a.m.elshal@student.tue.nl

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background

The livestock industry constitutes a considerable part of the world's economy. In fact, it generates around € 8.6 billion every year in the Netherlands alone [1]. At the same time, there is a clear trend of automation in this sector that aims to increase the efficiency and decrease the amount of human labour.

However, one of the major costs for the farmers in this field is due to the diseases contracted by their animals. By developing a system that could detect such diseases, and other abnormal behavior, one could potentially reduce this cost by a great amount.

B. Application Description

The main purpose of this project is to design a system that can help farmers monitor the health of cattle while they are grazing. This will be done using wireless sensor network (WSN) technology, because of its ability to deliver real-time monitoring at a very low cost. However, on account of range limitations of WSN transceivers, the system will be designed for a relatively small field of 10 ha which is in the range of an average dairy farm in the Netherlands [2].

The network of the system will consist of three types of nodes: a base station, which acts as a data sink; sensor nodes, one for each head of cattle, recording health characteristics; and a number of relay nodes on fixed positions in the field, forwarding data from the sensor nodes to the base station. The reason for using relay nodes, is to be able to cover the majority of the field.

The system will be used both to detect different types of diseases, for example: fever, lameness and mastitis, and to detect if a cow is in estrus. This can be accomplished by the use of accelerometers, microphones, and temperature sensors in the sensor nodes [3]. Every 5 minutes, the sensor nodes will send the acquired data in a processed form to the base station for storage. The base station can analyse the sample values to detect patterns that correspond to different diseases or the onset of estrus.

C. Related Work

Wireless livestock monitoring has become a widely researched area in recent years due to the increased availability and lower costs of wireless sensor network technologies. WSNs have been utilized in many livestock monitoring applications around the world such as animal localization, behavior analysis, health monitoring or pregnancy detection in cows. Several studies are concentrated to raw data collection [4], [10] for later data processing and research. The main drawback of these studies is the high energy consumption of the sensor nodes, which limits the lifetime of the nodes to only a few days at most. Also the storage and processing of collected data would be a problem in longer term.

Most of the livestock monitoring WSNs are designed for cattle [4]–[15] but there are also examples of studies for sheep health and behavior monitoring [19] and chicken monitoring for avian influenza surveillance in poultry farms with ultra low power wireless sensor nodes [17], [18]. The wireless health monitoring of cows has been one of the most important researched topics among authors. Kumar et al. [7] and Wang et al. [10] both developed cattle health monitoring WSNs based on the IEEE 802.15.4 protocol. Hwang et al. [9] showed that continuous monitoring and comparison of cattle activity can be used for disease prediction and prevention. In addition to disease prediction, pregnancy detection is also possible using continuous monitoring [13].

Wireless sensor networks can be used for livestock localization indoor [20] or outdoor [12], [14]. Panckhurst et al. [12] developed a GPS based wireless positioning system, while Huirican et al. [14] demonstrated that the link quality indication (LQI) feature of the ZigBee protocol can also be a candidate for outdoor livestock localization. Livestock positioning can have different purposes around the world, like the prevention of pastureland degradation and desertification in Mongolia [16] or cattle rustling prevention in Africa [8].

The ZigBee protocol and a carrier frequency of 2.4 GHz are widely used [7], [8], [14], [19], however some of the authors [6], [12], [17], [18] preferred sub-gigahertz carrier frequencies

due to the higher communication distance. Sousa Silva et al. [6] have demonstrated that a Floating Base Sensor Network (FBSN) is also a feasible solution for data collection in large mobile wireless sensor networks. Kwong et al. [15] have analysed the problem of signal penetration through animal's body and they proposed a two antennae scheme for an optimized radio coverage of the cattle's neck collar. In this project we will not consider the interference caused by the body of the cows.

II. APPLICATION SPECIFIC CHALLENGES

A. Mobility

Mobility presents a major challenge for sensor nodes mounted on cattle since they are subject to frequent changes in location. The animal monitoring system must be able to support animal mobility. The network topology and routing paths should therefore be dynamic, able to respond to frequent animal movement while optimising packet delivery.

B. Size of Field

A key challenge in a wireless network of this kind is the coverage of the wireless nodes. In cattle monitoring WSNs the network architecture should be able to cover enough area of the fields and must be scalable accordingly when needed for larger fields. The average size of a dairy farm field in the Netherlands is around 100,000 m² and the maximum range of Zigbee WSN protocol is approximately 500 m, so theoretically, only one or two relay nodes could cover a sufficient area of the field. In reality, transceivers with such range capabilities are not used in WSN applications, because of cost and power constraints.

C. Wireless Communication

As the animals move freely on the field, wireless technology is considered the only feasible method to establish and maintain communication between a base station and network nodes attached to the cattle. The wireless communication imposes several challenges on the design, like signal attenuation in the medium, interference from other radio signals, crosstalk from the other nodes, etc. As the radio signal generated from the node is weak owing to preserve battery on the node, a significant amount of wireless signal is attenuated by the animal tissue. For maximum signal coverage from relay node the antenna on the animal is placed on a neck collar with two antenna on both sides of the neck to have spatial diversity. Also the radio element is switched off as soon as the data transmission is finished so as to maximize battery life.

D. Energy Consumption

The battery usage is one of the major constraint in cattle monitoring networks because the radio collars used for cattle monitoring are expected to run for up to several years without battery replacement. As there is limited battery power available per node, low powered, lightweight radio antennas should be considered for the design. The network protocol should be designed so as to use limited battery power and only communicate with the base station, to provide adequate

amount of data required for monitoring health of cattle. The processors used by the nodes should be chosen so as to consume a minimum amount of power, while still being able to perform the necessary operations on the data as required by the application.

E. Cost of the System

The design of a WSN should not be too expensive. Furthermore the wireless nodes must be low-cost with high lifespan and low maintenance in order to reduce the cost of managing the system. Another reason for the sensor nodes to be low-cost is the potentially high number of nodes needed for monitoring an entire herd.

III. REQUIREMENTS

To ensure that the designed system can meet the challenges described in chapter II, it needs to meet the following requirements:

- 1) The network must be implemented in such a way that if a sensor node moves out of coverage, the sensor node will be reassigned to the network once it moves into coverage again.
- 2) The end-to-end latency between the sensor nodes and the base station must be less than 2 minutes for at least 90 % of data packets.
- 3) For every sensor node at least 70 % of the recorded sensor data must be delivered to the base station during a 5 hour period.
- 4) The time until the first sensor node of the network fails must be greater than one year.
- 5) The network must function and be scalable for up to 30 sensor nodes.
- 6) The network must continue to function whether nodes are added or removed.
- 7) When out of coverage, each sensor node must be able to store sensor values for a period of up to four hours.

A. Herd size

B. Resting Time

C. Data size

One of the most important requirements for the system is to be able to handle the amount of data generated by the sensors. Estimating this amount is thus also very important. For storing the temperature of the cow after processing the raw data from the sensors, one byte is enough to give a reasonable resolution. This is because a dairy cows normal rectal temperature lies between 38.3°C and 38.9°C [21] and one could limit the byte to represent values between 30°C and 50°C without losing any information. Using the same argumentation, one byte could also be used to store the average heart rate, because the normal heart rate for a dairy cow lies between 40 and 84 beats per minute [21].

In addition, to store the data gathered from the accelerometers, one could devise a similar strategy to the one used in a study where the behaviour of sows were classified [22]. In this study, the activities of the animals were organized into four

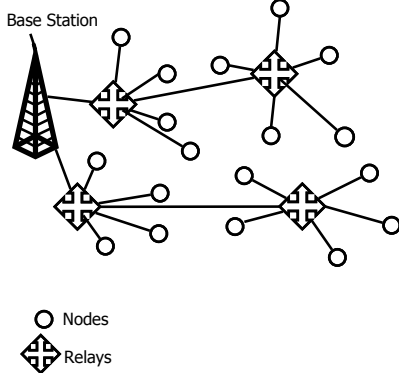


Fig. 1. An overview of the network topology.

different sets, using a method specifically developed for low powered embedded devices. This resulted in a classification with an accuracy of close to 90 %. Using data in this format, the researchers were able to detect the onset of farrowing. In this study only four sets of behaviours were used, if it is possible to develop similar sets for behavioural studies on cows, one could potentially store this data using only two bits per sample.

Using two samples for both the temperature and the heart rate, while also rounding up to the nearest byte, the total amount of sensor data needed to be sent each five minute interval would be five bytes.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION

CHANGE THIS

The system will be developed for platforms supporting ContikiOs. For the physical- and MAC layers, the standard protocol IEEE 802.15.4 [23] will be used. For the network- and application layer, features from ContikiOs will be used. Moreover, a routing algorithm might possibly be designed, if the routing algorithms present in ContikiOs are deemed unfitting for our application.

A. Simulation Software

Since we decided to make the simulation using COOJA on Contiki OS instead of using real hardware, we tried to make use of the software as much as possible and tested multiple scenarios on it. We also tried to make use of the different functionalities COOJA provides like mobility support and used BonnMotion to generate a more sophisticated mobility scenarios that can roughly match the cows movements which is described thoroughly in the mobility section.

B. Network Topology

The network topology of the implementation has a tree like structure with the base station acting as the root of the tree, see Fig 1. The relay nodes act as the branches of the tree,

being connected to the base station through each other, while the sensor nodes behave like the leaves of the tree.

The sensor nodes send data to any relay node that is within transmission range. Once received by a relay node, the data will be forwarded to the base station with the help of a routing protocol.

C. Physical Layer

In order to get an increased range and mitigate the problems with coverage, carrier frequencies between 902 MHz and 928 MHz of the IEEE 802.15.4 standard, were originally considered. However, as these frequencies are not supported by the TI CC2420 transceiver of the Telos B, a frequency of around 2.4 GHz was used instead.

For the modulation, the direct-sequence spread spectrum is used, because it is implemented in the transceiver mentioned above.

Different transmission powers are used for the different node types used in the implementation. The base station and relay nodes both use the maximum transmission power of the transceiver to ensure that the relay nodes can be placed as far apart as possible. The sensor nodes, on the other hand, use half of the maximum transmission power to save energy. Because the sensitivity of the Telos B nodes cannot be changed, this introduces an asymmetry between the nodes: relay nodes can reach the sensor nodes at maximum range while the converse is not possible. Even though this reduces the coverage compared to the case where maximum transmission power is also used in the sensor nodes, there is still one benefit: few relay nodes are needed to create a chain to a relay node placed far away from the base station (for example in a remote corner of the field). Thus the sensor nodes will still have a short distance to the nearest relay node.

According to an experiment performed in an outdoor environment, the average propagation path loss at 60 m for a link between two Telos B Nodes was estimated to be 92.3 dB. Using this value, along with 0 dBm, the maximum transmission power of the Telos B node, in the path propagation loss formula:

$$P_r[dBm] = P_t[dBm] - P_L[dB]$$

where P_r is the received power, P_t is the transmitted power, and P_L is the propagation path loss gives -92.3 dBm which is greater than -94 dBm, the nominal receiving sensitivity of a Telos B node. Taking this into account, the maximum transmission distance of the nodes are set to 60 m in the simulation.

D. MAC Layer

For the MAC layer, there are two modes to be used in the IEEE 802.15.4 standard: nonbeacon-enabled mode and beacon-enabled mode. In the former a unslotted CSMA/CA mechanism is used. In the latter one, a more elaborate scheme is used, wherein special nodes of the network, called coordinators, regularly send out beacons to synchronize with the nodes they are associated with. The period between two beacons is

called a superframe, and within this the nodes use a slotted CSMA/CA mechanism.

Because of the need for synchronization, the beacon-enabled mode might cause problems if a sensor node moves out of the coverage of a coordinator for a longer period of time, or if a sensor node needs to switch to a different coordinator. The sensor node might have to listen for a very long time to receive the next beacon, possibly even the whole time while it is out of range, thus consuming a lot of power.

On the other hand, the unslotted CSMA/CA mechanism of the nonbeacon-enabled mode, in addition to being less complex, does not require the nodes associated with a coordinator to regularly receive a beacon, and is thus suitable for the mobile nature of our application. The main drawback is the power consumption required for continuously listening at regular intervals. However, since the relay nodes and the base station are the only ones that need to receive data, only these will have to listen continuously, and not the sensor nodes. In view of these arguments, the design will use the nonbeacon-enabled mode. However, as contiki does not implement unslotted CSMA/CA, we will use one of the congestion-based MAC layers that contiki provides, in its place.

Contiki Operating System uses a little bit different network stack than the usual 5 layer TCP/IP model. The Medium Access Control (MAC) Layer usually resides between the Physical and the network layer. Contiki uses 2 more layer under the MAC layer and above the physical layer which are: Radio Duty-Cycle (RDC) and Frammer layers as in the figure. The three different layers can be changed through the global variables `NETSTACK_FRAMER`, `NETSTACK_RDC` and `NETSTACK_MAC`, these variables are defined in compilation time.

Framer layer has some auxiliary functions for building the frame with data to be transmitted or parsing the received data. Since we only want the basic functions from this layer, we used the protocol `framer-contikimac`.

Radio Duty-Cycle (RDC) layer is the most crucial layer as it is the one responsible of the sleep period of the nodes, it also manages when the packets will be transmitted and at the same time makes sure that the nodes are awake when receiving packets. We used `ContikiMAC` since it uses a simple but efficient timing scheme to allow its wake-up mechanism to be highly power efficient [25]. Results mentioned in [24] show that using `ContikiMAC` reduced the average duty-cycle from 17% to 9%, which makes the energy consumption of the nodes drastically more efficient.

For the MAC layer, we used Carrier-Sense Medium Access (CSMA) protocol, as it contains addressing, sequence number and retransmissions which are crucially needed in our application other than the default `nullmac` protocol.

E. Network- and Application Layer

- 1) *Packet Structure:*
- 2) *Routing Mechanism:*
- 3) *Sensor Node:*
- 4) *Relay Node:*

TABLE I
LATENCY AND PDR USING 6 RELAY NODES

Number of sensor nodes	Mobility Type	Latency		PDR (%)
		Avg. (sec)	<2 min (%)	
5	1	44.85	90	31.58
	2	48	97.3	77.89
15	1	41.71	94.1	41.75
	2	24.73	97.3	77.54
30	1	14.9	99.6	81.75
	2	19.17	98.6	62.11

TABLE II
LATENCY AND PDR USING 12 RELAY NODES

Number of sensor nodes	Mobility Type	Latency		PDR (%)
		Avg. (sec)	<2 min (%)	
5	1	87.02	70.8	50.53
	2	65.28	87.1	89.47
15	1	36.16	98.3	41.4
	2	32.42	95.5	85.26
30	1	16.34	98.6	90.88
	2	21.86	98.3	82.81

5) Base Station:

V. PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

A. Mobility Models

Since we are using simulation only to test our implementation, we wanted to generate a more sophisticated mobility scenario. So we used `BonnMotion` which is java application that can create and analyze many different mobility scenarios. The only format than can be used by `COOJA` is `wiseML` format. But we found out that the library used for `wiseML` format is not implemented yet in the official page of `COOJA` and its different forums. There was an implementation for such format done by `CONET` (the Cooperating Objects NETwork of Excellence), but the `cooja-wiseml` extension was not yet publicly available and they have `CONET` version of `Instant Contiki` with all their implementations installed, but the download link expired. So we implemented a python script to convert the `wiseml` format mobility file to the `dat` format used by `COOJA`.

`BonnMotion` offers nearly 21 mobility scenarios, we used 2 mobility scenarios that matches our mobility requirements: `Reference Point Group Mobility` model (Figure 1) where sensor nodes are moving in groups uniformly and `Nomadic Community Mobility` model (Figure 2) where sensor nodes move in groups but some nodes can also move or wait alone. Finally, we ended up using only `Nomadic Mobility` model because we already have many test scenarios and `Nomadic mobility` model simulates the cows behavior more precisely.

B. Test Scenarios

C. Data Extraction

D. Results

In order to evaluate the power consumption of the sensor nodes during the simulations, we used the `Powertrace` power profiling tool. This tool, part of the `ContikiOS`, has a 94%

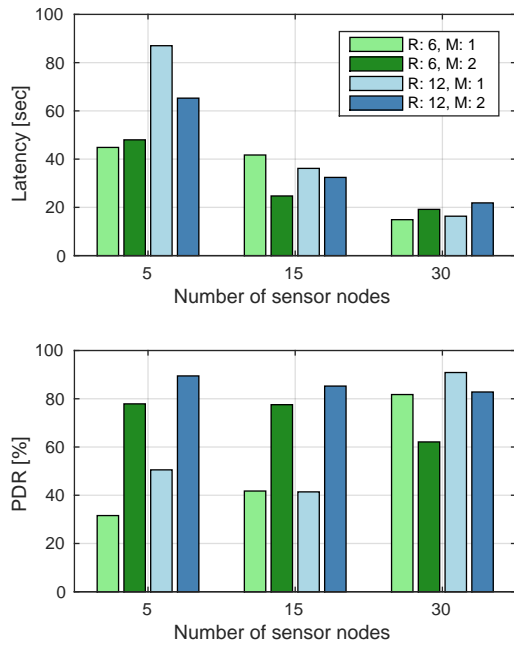


Fig. 2. Simulation results: (a) average latency and (b) packet delivery ratio (PDR). R and M denote the number of relay nodes and the mobility type, respectively

accuracy in estimating the power consumption compared to hardware-based power measurements [26].

E. Discussion

VI. CONCLUSION

VII. FUTURE WORK

REFERENCES

- [1] <https://www.government.nl/topics/agriculture-and-livestock/contents/livestock-farming>, taken 12:30 22 sep 2015.
- [2] D. B. Grigg, *The Agricultural Systems of the World: An Evolutionary Approach*, Cambridge University Press, november 1974, p. 188.
- [3] A. Helwatkar, D. Riordan and J. Walsh, *Sensor Technology For Animal Health Monitoring*, Proceedings of the 8th International Conference on Sensing Technology, sep, 2014.
- [4] Y. Guo, P. Corke, G. Poulton, T. Wark, G. Bishop-Hurley, and D. Swain, *Animal Behaviour Understanding using Wireless Sensor Networks*, in Proceedings 2006 31st IEEE Conference on Local Computer Networks, 2006, pp. 607614.
- [5] K. Smith, A. Martinez, R. Craddolph, H. Erickson, D. Andresen, and S. Warren, *An Integrated Cattle Health Monitoring System*, in 28th Annual International Conference of the IEEE Engineering in Medicine and Biology Society, 2006. EMBS 06, 2006, pp. 46594662.
- [6] A. C. de Sousa Silva, A. I. C. Arce, S. Souto, and E. J. X. Costa, *A wireless floating base sensor network for physiological responses of livestock*, Computers and Electronics in Agriculture, vol. 49, no. 2, pp. 246254, Nov. 2005.
- [7] A. Kumar and G. P. Hancke, *A Zigbee-Based Animal Health Monitoring System*, IEEE Sensors Journal, vol. 15, no. 1, pp. 610617, Jan. 2015.
- [8] P. K. Mashoko Nkwari, S. Rimer, and B. S. Paul, *Cattle monitoring system using wireless sensor network in order to prevent cattle rustling*, in IST-Africa Conference Proceedings, 2014, 2014, pp. 110.
- [9] J. Hwang and H. Yoe, *Design and implementation of wireless sensor network based livestock activity monitoring system*, in Future Generation Information Technology, Springer, 2011, pp. 161168.
- [10] H. Wang, B. Davies, and A. O. Fapojuwo, *Inter-wireless body area network scheduling algorithm for livestock health monitoring*, in 2015 IEEE Wireless Communications and Networking Conference (WCNC), 2015, pp. 21322137.
- [11] K. H. Kwong, T.-T. Wu, H. G. Goh, K. Sasloglou, B. Stephen, I. Glover, C. Shen, W. Du, C. Michie, and I. Andonovic, *Practical considerations for wireless sensor networks in cattle monitoring applications*, Computers and Electronics in Agriculture, vol. 81, pp. 3344, Feb. 2012.
- [12] B. Panckhurst, P. Brown, K. Payne, and T. C. A. Molteno, *Solar-powered sensor for continuous monitoring of livestock position*, in 2015 IEEE Sensors Applications Symposium (SAS), 2015, pp. 16.
- [13] A. H. H. Nograles and F. S. Caluyo, *Wireless system for pregnancy detection in cows by monitoring temperature changes in body*, in 2013 IEEE 9th International Colloquium on Signal Processing and its Applications (CSPA), 2013, pp. 1116.
- [14] J. I. Huircn, C. Muoz, H. Young, L. Von Dossow, J. Bustos, G. Vivallo, and M. Toneatti, *ZigBee-based wireless sensor network localization for cattle monitoring in grazing fields*, Computers and Electronics in Agriculture, vol. 74, no. 2, pp. 258264, Nov. 2010.
- [15] K. H. Kwong, T. T. Wu, H. G. Goh, B. Stephen, M. Gilroy, C. Michie, and I. Andonovic, *Wireless sensor networks in agriculture: cattle monitoring for farming industries*, in Progress In Electromagnetics Research Symposium, 2009, vol. 5, pp. 3135.
- [16] S.-G. Choi, E. Norinpel, and J. Yoo, *Cluster-based routing protocol in wireless sensor networks for tracking livestock movements in Mongolian nomadic herding*, in 2013 8th International Forum on Strategic Technology (IFOST), 2013, vol. 2, pp. 163167.
- [17] H. Okada, H. Nogami, T. Itoh, and T. Masuda, *Development of Low Power Technologies for Health Monitoring System Using Wireless Sensor Nodes*, in 2012 Second Workshop on Design, Control and Software Implementation for Distributed MEMS (dMEMS), 2012, pp. 9095.
- [18] H. Okada, H. Nogami, T. Kobayashi, T. Masuda, and T. Itoh, *Development of ultra low power wireless sensor node with piezoelectric accelerometer for health monitoring*, in 2013 Transducers Eurosensors XXVII: The 17th International Conference on Solid-State Sensors, Actuators and Microsystems (TRANSDUCERS EUROSENSORS XXVII), 2013, pp. 2629.
- [19] E. S. Nadimi, R. N. Jrgensen, V. Blanes-Vidal, and S. Christensen, *Monitoring and classifying animal behavior using ZigBee-based mobile ad hoc wireless sensor networks and artificial neural networks*, Computers and Electronics in Agriculture, vol. 82, pp. 4454, Mar. 2012.
- [20] M. Asikainen, K. Haataja, and P. Toivanen, *Wireless indoor tracking of livestock for behavioral analysis*, in Wireless Communications and Mobile Computing Conference (IWCMC), 2013 9th International, 2013, pp. 18331838.
- [21] https://en.wikivet.net/Bovine_Physiology_-_WikiNormals, taken 12:30 22 sep 2015
- [22] G. F. Marchioro, C. Cornou, A. R. Kristensen and J. Madsen, *Sows activity classification device using acceleration data A resource constrained approach*, Computers and Electronics in Agriculture, issn: 01681699, jun, 2011, pages 110–117,
- [23] IEEE Computer Society, LAN/MAN Standards Committee, Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers and IEEE-SA Standards Board, *IEEE standard for local and metropolitan area networks. Part 15.4*, isbn 978-0-7381-6684-1, Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, 2011,
- [24] MAC Protocols in Contiki - http://anrg.usc.edu/contiki/index.php/MAC_protocols_in_Cor
- [25] A. Dunkels, *The ContikiMAC Radio Duty Cycling Protocol*, SICS Technical Report, December 2011.
- [26] A. Dunkels, J. Eriksson, N. Finne and N. Tsiftes, *Powertrace: Network-level Power Profiling for Low-power Wireless Networks*, Swedish Institute of Computer Science, Technical Report, March 2011.