General Comments

MAIN MANUSCRIPT:

In the interpretative summary, you first mention reported advantages of bedded pack, and then report that they were similar to tiestalls and freestalls, and conclude that Bedded Pack can be a viable option. [I’m missing something in the logic …. E.g., was your hypothesis that bedded pack would be worse than TS and FS? But that differs from the anecdotal reporting?

We decided we needed to propose a hypothesis based on previous literature; so, yes: our hypothesis ended up being BP would be worse than tiestall or freestall

I don’t see any graphs. Use them when possible and leave tables only to detailed information. In text, just refer to these with the details and don’t repeat the details in the text.

Will check to make sure I don’t repeat details

Otherwise the data do not lend themselves to be presented as graphs.

Add page numbers

Most journals ask for a brief section where you explain which author did what, so you can delete that type of detail about you and Tucker in the Methods section itself.

JDS does not ask for such a section; at least not in the “Instructions to Authors”

The Data management and analysis section can be trimmed considerably. The information about how the survey data were collected would be connected to each objective. No need to describe methods for descriptive statistics – just name the software used. In the statistical analysis paragraph, I suggest this order: 1) name test with variables by objective, 2) any transformations, 3) software and procedures within software.

Really? Thought I followed pretty standard format for observational epi studies

Results: I suggest moving the herd description to the methods (nope.)

Avoid starting paragraphs with “Descriptive statistics are found in Table 2”. That is not a good topic sentence. Start with a statement about trends/patterns, e.g., milk quality and quantity were similar whether cows were in bedded pack or traditional methods of tiestall or freestall (Table 2). Move all the details of numbers, means and ranges etc for the table and don’t repeat here.

I would like to hear about the models and what variables were the best predictors.

In multivariable models were no signif preds. Results are presented in tables; followed specific format as suggested by Sandra

Details of the statistical method should move to the methods. (make sure I’ve removed M and M stuff from Results)

Discussion: focus on the key findings, interpretation in context of current literature. Do not repeat methods or results. (make sure I’ve removed M and M stuff from Results) I suggest the following order of the section: 1) what the main finding(s) were for each objective, 2) any novelty of the study, (Sandra says she likes to start with this as “the hook”) and 3) limitations go at the end (isn’t that basically where mine are…?)

. For example, state that BP is a viable option right at the top of the discussion. Limitations would include the low statistical power, uneven sample sizes (however, many statistical methods accommodate uneven sample sizes), overparameterization of models, covid interruptions etc.

SUPPLEMENTARY DOCUMENTATION – I only have general comments and no specific edits.

*Decimal align and center (rather than right align) numeric contents within columns of supplemental tables. Alternatively center the column titles*

Don’t really know what decimal align is but I centered the columns with numeric data as well as their titles and I think it looks good

A computer screen with a screenshot of a computer

Description automatically generated

*You currently have 2 tables labeled Supplementary Table S1. Perhaps the second one should be labeled Table S5.*

Great! Yup that was a mistake. Left an extra table in by accident.