Genetic and epigenetic variation factors in the relationships between humans and animals

P. Le Neindre

Laboratoire Adaptation des Herbivores aux Milieux Centre de Clermont/Theix, 63122 Saint Genès Champanelle, France

Abstract

Farm animals have to adapt to environmental conditions that are far different from those experienced in the wild. One of the main restrictions is the necessary close contact with humans. Methods must be sought to prevent animals fleeing at human approach in order, firstly, to avoid physical harm to the handler and animal, secondly, to reduce the discomfort caused by human presence, and thus, thirdly, to improve animal welfare and if possible production. Any experience of good animal–human contact makes subsequent handling easier particularly if it occurs at certain specific periods, such as the first months of life, parturition and weaning. Animals' subsequent behaviour is largely determined by whether these contacts are positive or not. Genetic characteristics also condition animal reaction. It is therefore possible to affect the quality of the relation between farm animals and humans, and to improve both the animal's welfare and their production.

Temporal patterning of suckling bouts in free-ranging beef cattle

L.M. Lidfors, P. Jensen, B. Algers

Department of Animal Hygiene, Swedish University of Agriculture Sciences, P.O. Box 345, S-532 24 Skara, Sweden

Abstract

Suckling was studied in primiparous cross-bred beef cattle kept on a 1000 ha grazing area. Recordings were made at mean calf ages of 1, 7, 65, and 123 days. Two types of