Abomasal ulcers in Danish dairy cattle, the preliminary results

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Abomasal ulcer is a potential painful condition which affects cattle of all ages. Most investigations of abomasal ulcers in adult cattle are based on patient cases from University hospitals1-3. One foreign investigation of apparently healthy cattle at slaughter showed a prevalence of 21% of the apparently healthy cattle having mild degrees of abomasal ulcer4. A Danish investigation has shown acute penetrating abomasal ulcers are the cause of death in 1.5% of Danish dairy cattle5. Abomasal ulcers can vary in severity and the symptoms can vary from unspecific signs of pain to decreased feed uptake and decreased milk production to anemia, peritonitis and sudden death. Because the clinical signs of abomasal ulcer is difficult to recognize many cows are undiagnosed and it can cause a prolonged negative effect on the production, reproduction and welfare of the dairy cows. Abomasal ulcer can also be a sequel to a variety of other illnesses like mastitis, metritis and dislocated abomasum.

The purpose of this project is 1) to estimate the prevalence of abomasal ulcer in Danish dairy cattle; 2) to evaluate a cheap diagnostic test and 3) to evaluate a treatment of abomasal ulcer. The prevalence estimate will be used to target the efforts of diagnosing and treat the abomasal ulcers early in the process in order to decrease the economic losses in decreased milk production and reduce the welfare costs associated with abomasal ulcers.

The project is performed in collaboration between the University of Copenhagen, the University of Aarhus and SEGES. The project is planned to be executed during the years 2016 until 2019. Therefore it is only the very preliminary results which are presented at the CPH Cattle seminar in November 2016.

References