

Effect of an advisory project in veterinary homeopathy for livestock on health and antibiotic use



Team of 22 veterinarians and CAM animal health practitioners

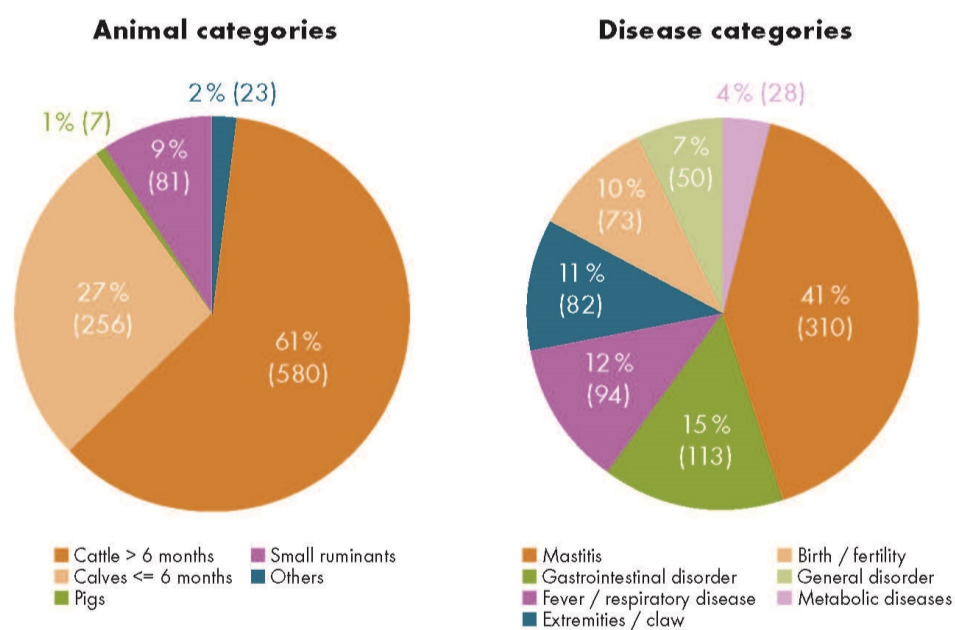
- 24 h advice per telephone in CAM
- On-site consultation for CAM
- CAM herd management
- www.kometian.ch

Background

The use of antimicrobial remedies plays an important role to restore livestock health. However, an overuse leads to an increase of antibiotic resistant bacteria. The treatment of animals with complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) may be a possibility to reduce the use of antibiotics and this risk. Many farmers are interested in alternative methods: Homeopathic remedies, for example, have no withdrawal period, are cheap and easy in application and suitable for therapy as well as for prevention. But in Switzerland only few veterinarians and alternative animal health practitioners are specialised on CAM in livestock. To close this gap a group of farmers and veterinarians established the project Kometian in 2012, where veterinarians as well as CAM animal health practitioners give advice to support farmers in treating their animals.

Advisory cases

In the years 2017 and 2018 we could evaluate in total 947 cases.



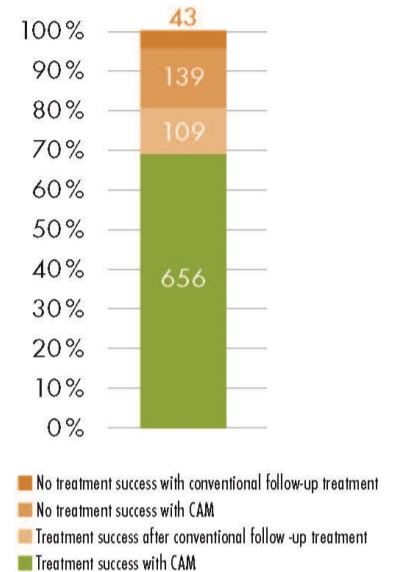
Objectives

- How does the health of individual animals developed after farmers getting advice from the Kometian team?
- Has the incidence of antibiotic treatment changed on farms after the first year of Kometian participation?

Health development of individual animals

947 cases the farmer was contacted again afterwards to gain information about the health development of the animal.

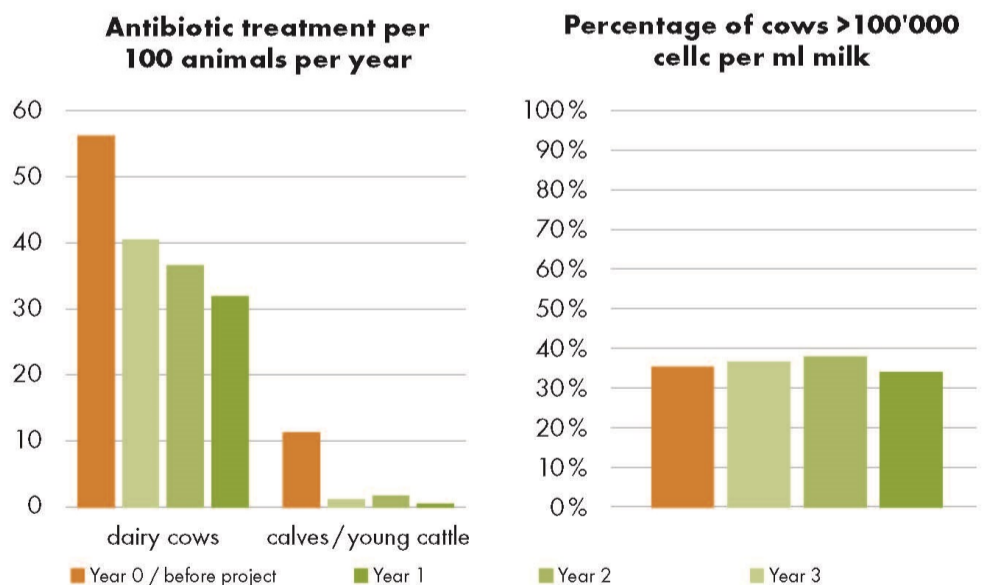
- In 81% of the cases no further conventional treatment was used
- In 69% of the cases were reported as a substantial improvement only with CAM therapy



Analysis of antibiotic treatments and udder health on farm level

On 24 dairy farms the treatment records and milk recording data were collected. The incidence of antibiotic treatment in the year before joining Kometian (Y0) was compared to the third project year (Y3).

- The average incidence rate of antibiotic treatments declined significantly ($p < 0.001$) from 56.2 to 32.8 treatments per 100 animals and year.
- In calves the rate of antimicrobial treatments per 100 animals and year declined from 11.4 (Y0) to 1.4 (Y3)
- The udder health remains stable (35.4% and 34.1% milk recordings with Somatic Cell Counts $> 100'000/ml$)



Conclusion

The advisory program seems to support the recovery of individual animals and to enhance dairy farmers to reduce the use of antimicrobials.

Reference

Maeschli et al., 2019: Influence of a complementary and alternative medical advisory program by telephone on the use of antibiotics in livestock in Switzerland. Complementary Medicine Research.

Jakob M. 2018. Entwicklung der Tiergesundheit und der Behandlungintensität von Schweizer Milchviehbetrieben im Projekt Kometian. (Master thesis)