

Heat stress with an automated milking system

Optimal cow traffic is always an important issue for dairy herds with an automatic milking system (AMS), but especially so during periods of warm weather where cows are at risk for heat stress. The greatest challenge for herds with an AMS is to maintain the number of visits made by the cows. This is no small feat as cows tend to crowd in cooler areas of the shed and become slow. A horizontal ventilator above the AMS helps cows to cool down, and in addition keeps the flies away. This makes a visit to the AMS more attractive. In addition, be critical about the number and location of water troughs in the shed (alongside water quality and water availability). Cows want (and have to) be able to drink without disturbance, and equally of identical importance, without blocking passageways. If required, place additional troughs along the feeding gate. When an adequate water supply is in place, then cows can maintain their water intake, which is important when under heat stress because water intake can easily increase by 20%. Nutritional support with buffers, slowly fermentable glucogenic ingredients, and specialties can help the cow to stay active under heat stress and keep the traffic moving.



