
Summary

Lameness, hoof lesion development and behaviour were compared for two groups of 10 heifers: one in early pregnancy (PH), the other in early lactation (LH). Both groups were housed in the summer in cubicles under identical conditions. Behavioural observations commenced immediately after housing, and then at 2, 4 and 6 weeks post-housing. Locomotion scores were assessed weekly, and feet were examined for lesions at approximately –1, 0, 1 and 2 months after housing. All four feet were photographed, lesions were scored subjectively for severity, and lesion size and position were estimated using image analysis techniques. LH already had greater total lesion scores before housing. More severe linear lesions in the LH group were associated with reduced lying, and less idling, increased standing in cubicles and more disturbed lying behaviour.

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