



THE UNIVERSITY OF
BRITISH COLUMBIA

Higher stocking rates reduce lying time

Jose Fregonesi, Cassandra Tucker, Dan Weary, and Christoph Winckler

INTRODUCTION:

Dairy cows are typically provided with 1 or fewer freestalls per cow. The objective of this experiment was to understand how freestall availability affects the lying and standing behaviour of dairy cattle.

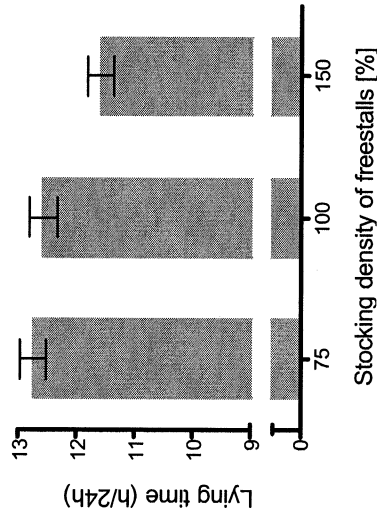
METHODOLOGY:

In two experiments, we manipulated stocking density (Experiment 1: 75%, 100%, and 150%; Experiment 2: 100%, 110%, 120%, 133%, 150%) by changing the number of stalls available for each group of cows (n=4 for each experiment, tested in a switch-back design). Time-lapse video recording was used to monitor lying and standing times as well as displacements from the freestalls.

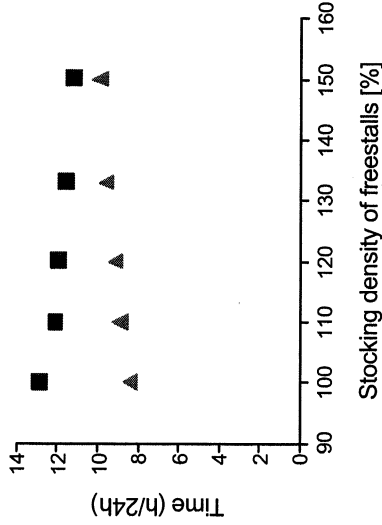
RESULTS:



Cows are more likely to displace others from freestalls at high stocking densities



In our first experiment, we found that when cows are overstocked they spend less time lying down



In our second experiment, we found that as the stocking density increase, cows spend less time lying down and more time standing outside the stall

IMPLICATIONS:

When given fewer freestalls, cows spend less time lying down and more time standing outside the stalls. Standing outside the stall may be a risk factor for lameness and should be minimized by housing cows at lower stocking densities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: Thanks to NSERC, DFC, BC Dairy Foundation, and many others for their financial support.