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10th International Symposium  
**MODERN TRENDS**  
**IN LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION**

# PROCEEDINGS



Belgrade, Serbia, 2 - 4 October, 2013

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INSTITUTE FOR ANIMAL HUSBANDRY  
BELGRADE - SERBIA

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## STUDY OF THE VARIABILITY OF MILK TRAITS IN THE POPULATION OF HOLSTEIN FRIESIAN CATTLE IN CENTRAL SERBIA

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**Abstract:** The work includes the review of production results, i.e. milk performance phenotypes of Black and White Holstein cows in Central Serbia. The analysis of quantitative phenotypic parameters was carried out in five regions (breeding regions) on several large and small farms which housed 1090 cows - first calving heifers. Using the method of Least Squares - the fixed model, highly significant deviation of milk yield, milk fat from the average ( $P < 0.01$ ) was established. Cows reared in the region 4 in the first lactation produced 503 kg less milk compared to the general average and 852 kg less milk than those reared in the region 3. Birth year caused statistically significant differences in milk yield and milk fat yield ( $P < 0.05$ ), except % of milk protein where no significant variations ( $P > 0.05$ ) were determined. Season in which the cows had calved caused a highly significant deviation of milk yield ( $P < 0.01$ ) and significant deviations of yields of milk fat and protein ( $P < 0,05$ ).

**Keywords:** Holstein, cow, phenotype, milk, milk fat, protein

### Introduction

Black and white Holstein Friesian cattle breed is the prevailing breed of dairy cattle in the world (about 90% of the total milk production). Holstein cattle are bred in Europe, mainly in the lower regions. In the Republic of Serbia around 100.000 cows and heifers of Holstein-Friesian breed are grown (Petrović *et al.*, 2013). The majority of them are reared in Vojvodina, a small number is grown in central Serbia. With the exception of cows that are reared in the vicinity of Belgrade organized in a very intense production of several large farms (PKB Padinska Skela, PIK Zemun, BD Agro Dobanovci, etc.), a number that is grown on

small farms in Central Serbia is small and amounts to a few thousand heads (under the milk recording control less than 3000). That is why our research was conducted and the goal was to determine how often in semi-intensive conditions of care and nutrition, quantitative genetic potential of milk production traits of the breed is exerted. In recent years (last decade) began breeding of this breed of dairy cattle on small farms in Central Serbia. Traditionally, farmers in these regions are directed towards the production of milk and meat from Domestic Spotted and Simmental cattle that are less demanding in terms of nutrition, rearing and that give excellent results in less intensive conditions (milk, meat). Market, competition, intensifying and specialization in manufacturing led to the need for growing od dairy breeds of cattle with improved milk performance and increasingly in these parts of Serbia farms are formed with higher number of cattle (15-50).

In addition to feeding and care, particular attention should be paid to the genetic improvement of cattle. Genetic improvement of Black and White cattle in Serbia is achieved by selection and breeding of Holstein - Friesian breed. Methods of genetic improvement are essentially based on the use of high-quality bulls of Holstein breed from domestic artificial insemination (AI) centers and the use of imported seed. Many of the domestic and foreign researchers and scientists are involved and are working on the improvement of milk production phenotypes that require continuous operation and include the systematic improvement of quantitative genetic traits and continuous work on their improved expression. High yield of milk, milk fat and protein, in addition to the selection measures requires providing of appropriate paragenetic factors (nutrition, housing, rearing, health care, etc.). The following authors have studied quantitative characteristics and performance data for this breed of cattle and the influence of paragenetic factors on same properties: *Gaidarsca et al. (2004)*, *De Marchi et al. (2008)*, *Pantelić et al. (2010; 2011)*, *Pirlo et al. (2000)*, *Petrović et al. (1999a;1999b)*, *Kuczyńska et al. (2012)* and *Stojić et al. (2011)*.

## Material and Methods

Data included in the analysis were collected in five regions (breeding regions) in Central Serbia. The regions differ in terms of geographical characteristics and hence the production of feed for cattle feeding. The differences are in the method and the quality of the nutrition, management of production, the genetic quality of cattle, etc. The research included 1090 cows-first calving heifers of Black and White Holstein Friesian breed. These animals have calved, i.e. concluded the lactation in the period from 2010 to 2013. Calving years of these animals were divided into four seasons: I (February, March and April), II (May,

June and July), III (August, September and October), and IV (November, December and January).

The HF bulls-sires come from local AI centers, also imported bull semen from European populations of this breed was used. Cows- first calving heifers are kept in tie system and free, depending on the farm. Animals were fed in a usual way depending on the level of intensity of production and the breeding region and the difference was in the quality of feed, i.e. forage to concentrate ratio.

Statistical - mathematical analysis was performed by the Least Squares Mixed Model with fixed and random effects (LS - Least Squares and BLUP - Best Linear Unbiased Prediction) using the LSMLMW software (*Harvey, 1990*). When analysing the influence of breeding region, year and season of calving on milk performance of dairy cows in first lactation, the following model was used:

$$Y_{ijkl} = \mu + R_l + G_j + S_k + b_1(x_1-x_2) + e_{ijklm}$$

Where:

$Y_{ijkl}$  – individual animal ( $m$ ) reared in area ( $i$ ), calved in year ( $j$ ) and season ( $k$ ),

$\mu$  = general population average,

$OP_l$  = fixed effect of breeding area (1-4),

$G_j$  = fixed effect of year of calving (1-2),

$S_k$  = fixed effect of the season (1-4),

$b_1$  = linear regression effect of age at calving,

$e_{ijklm}$  = random error

## Results and Discussion

Different number of individual animals in each class, as well as presence of several impacts/factors (breeding region, year of calving, calving season) that influenced the expression of the traits, caused an analysis in which the method of Least Squares was used. Table 1 shows the results of milk traits of cows - first calving heifers. They produced in the first lactation (305 days) 5924 kg of milk with 225.7 kg of milk fat and 190.1 kg of protein

**Table 1. The mean (LSM) and errors of mean values (SE) of milk, fat and protein**

Trait	QMSL,kg	MFCSL,%	MFYSL,kg	PCSL,%	PYSL,kg
LSM	5923.7	3.81	225.7	3.21	190.1
S.E.	202.7	0.03	7.99	0.02	6.23

Legend: QMSL,kg – quantity of milk in standard lactation, kg (305 days); MFCSL,kg – milk fat content in standard lactation,% (305 days); MFYSL,kg - milk fat yield in standard lactation, kg (305 days); PCSL, kg - milk protein content in standard lactation,% (305 days); PYSL,kg - milk proteint yield in standard lactation,kg (305 days)

Similar data on the Black and White milk cows in first lactation (5658 kg and 3.84% milk fat and 5543 kg and 3.68%) were obtained by *Petrović et al. (1999a)*.

However, Holstein-Friesian heifers, as reported by *Gaidarska et al. (2004)* have realized lower milk yield compared to our results (4300 kg). The superiority of Holstein-Friesian cows in terms of the yield of milk produced is confirmed by results ranging from 6221 kg with 3.57% milk fat to 8500 kg with 3.48% milk fat (*Petrović et al., 1999b; Kuczyńska et al, 2012; Pirlo et al., 2000; De Marchi et al., 2008; Stojić et al., 2011*). *Pantelić et al. (2011)* have established production of 10245 kg of milk with 3.53% of milk fat, in Holstein-Friesian cows in intensive production of bull dams (Agricultural Corporation Belgrade).

**Table 2. The effect of paragenetic factors as LSM deviations ( $\hat{\epsilon}_i$ ) of milk traits of cows - first calving heifers**

Trait	QMSL,kg	MFCSL,%	MFYSL,kg	PCSL,%	PYSL,kg
$\mu$	5923	3.81	225.7	3.22	190.9
S.E.	202.7	.03	7.99	.02	6.23
Breeding region	$\hat{\epsilon}_i$	$\hat{\epsilon}_i$	$\hat{\epsilon}_i$	$\hat{\epsilon}_i$	$\hat{\epsilon}_i$
1	334	-0.09	9.9	-0.08	4.9
2	-352	0.07	- 6.9	0.04	-7.8
3	349	-0.08	-11.0	0.08	10.1
4	-503	0.06	- 7.4	0.06	-8.9
5	171	0.03	14.5	-0.09	2.9
ANOVA $F_{exp}$ .	<b>13.563**</b>	<b>27.256**</b>	<b>12.498**</b>	<b>24.563**</b>	<b>13.471**</b>
Calving year	$\hat{\epsilon}_i$	$\hat{\epsilon}_i$	$\hat{\epsilon}_i$	$\hat{\epsilon}_i$	$\hat{\epsilon}_i$
1	227	-0.16	-1.2	0.06	9.1
2	-284	0.09	-4.2	0.05	-4.9
3	56	0.07	5.3	-1.1	-3.9
ANOVA $F_{exp}$ .	<b>12.999*</b>	<b>19.351 *</b>	<b>10.658*</b>	<b>8.856<sup>NS</sup></b>	<b>9.001*</b>
Calving season	$\hat{\epsilon}_i$	$\hat{\epsilon}_i$	$\hat{\epsilon}_i$	$\hat{\epsilon}_i$	$\hat{\epsilon}_i$
1	420	- 1.1	5.8	1.6	23.9
2	276	- 0.7	7.9	0.1	11.5
3	-198	0.8	-3.1	-0.9	-14.2
4	-497	0.9	-10.5	-0.8	-21.1
ANOVA $F_{exp}$ .	<b>14.801**</b>	<b>20.987*</b>	<b>11.565*</b>	<b>17.987*</b>	<b>13.876*</b>

Legend: NS –  $P>0.05$ ; \* –  $P<0.05$ ; \*\* –  $P<0.01$ ; ANOVA - Least – Squares analysis of variance (exp. F)



The sum of a number of factors (paragenetic factors), which constitute a comprehensive term "breeding region" and its effect on milk traits is shown in Table 2. Using the method of Least Squares - fixed model, highly significant deviation was established in yield of milk and milk fat from the average ( $P < 0,01$ ). Thus, cows reared in the region 4 in the first lactation produced 503 kg less milk compared to the general average, and 852 kg less milk than those reared in the third region.

Calving year caused statistically significant deviations in milk yield and milk fat yield ( $P < 0,05$ ), except in case of % protein in milk for which no significant variations ( $P > 0,05$ ) were established. Season in which the cows had calved caused a highly significant deviation in regard to milk yield ( $P < 0,01$ ) and significant deviations in regard to yields of milk fat and protein ( $P < 0,05$ ). Cattle calved in December, January and February have produced 420 kg more milk than the general average, or 917 kg more milk than cows – first calving heifers which calved in the autumn months (Table 2).

## **Conclusion**

Knowledge of the influence of external factors on quantitative traits is very important with respect to their importance in achieving breeding goals and good economic results. Very little research can be found on the results of studying the quantitative milk traits of Black and White Holstein Friesian dairy cattle in Central Serbia, except for a few large herds of Holstein cattle reared in large agricultural companies (near Belgrade). Analysis of the results in this paper suggests that animals of this breed have not achieved satisfactory production according to their genetic potential. The reason for this is inadequate housing/rearing, feeding technology and lack of optimal conditions for maximum expression of genetic capacity of the animal. With proper care, nutrition and implementation of zoo-technical measures bred/selected cattle will realize the production in accordance with their genetic potential. This means the genetic improvement of the breed by breeding and selection through quality bulls-sires and systematic improvement of the quantitative genetic traits and continuous work on their improved expression.

## **Acknowledgment**

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## Ispitivanje varijabilnosti osobina mlečnosti populacije holštajn frizijskih goveda u centralnoj Srbiji

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### Rezime

Holštajn goveda se u Evropi gaje uglavnom u nižim predelima. U Republici Srbiji se gaji oko 100.000 krava i junica holštajn frizijske rase. Najveći broj gaji se u Vojvodini a manji deo u centralnoj Srbiji. Ako se izuzmu krave koje se gaje u okolini Beograda u vrlo intezivnoj organizovanoj proizvodnji na nekoliko velikih farmi (PKB Padinska Skela, PIK Zemun, BD Agro Dobanovci i dr.), broj koji se gaji na malim farmama u Centralnoj Srbiji je mali i iznosi nekoliko hiljada grla (pod kontrolom mlečnosti manje od 3000). Upravo zbog toga su obavljena naša istraživanja a cilj je bio da ustanovimo kako se u često poluintezivnim uslovima nege i ishrane, ispoljava genetski potencijal kvantitativnih osobina mlečnosti ove rase. U poslednjoj deceniji počelo je gajenje ove rase mlečnih goveda na malim farmama u Centralnoj Srbiji. Tradicionalno, farmeri u ovim regionima su okrenuti proizvodnji mleka i mesa domaće šarene odnosno simentalске rase goveda koja je manje zahtevna u pogledu ishrane, odgoja i koja u manje intezivnim uslovima daje odlične rezultate (mleko, meso).

Podaci obuhvaćeni analizom su prikupljeni u pet regiona (odgajivačka područja) u Centralnoj Srbiji. Regioni se razlikuju u pogledu geografskih karakteristika a samim tim u proizvodnji hraniva za ishranu krava. Razlike su u načinu i kvalitetu ishrane, menadžmentu u proizvodnji, genetskom kvalitetu grla i dr. Istraživanjem je obuhvaćeno 1090 grla krava-prvotelki crno bele odnosno holštajn-frizijske rase. Statističko matematička analiza obavljena je primenom mešovitog modela najmanjih kvadrata sa fiksnim i random uticajima (LS - Least Squares i Blup - Best linear Unbiased Prediction) primenom programa najmanjih kvadrata.

Različiti broj individua u pojedinim klasama kao i postojanje više uticaja (region gajenja, godina telenja, sezona telenja) koji su delovali na ispoljavanje ispitivanih osobina, uslovio je analizu u kojoj je korišćen metod najmanjih kvadrata. Prvotelke su u prvoj standardnoj laktaciji (305 dana) proizvele 5924 kg mleka sa 225.7 kg mlečne masti i 190.1 kg proteina. Primenom metoda najmanjih kvadrata, a pomoću fiksnog modela, ustanovljena su visoko značajna odstupanja prinosa mleka, mlečne masti od opšteg proseka ( $P < 0.01$ ). Tako su krave gajene u području 4 u prvoj laktaciji proizvele za 503 kg mleka manje u odnosu na opšti prosek i 852 kg mleka manje u odnosu na one koje su gajene u trećem regionu. Godina telenja je prouzrokovala statistički analizirano značajna odstupanja prinosa

mleka i mlečne masti ( $P < 0.05$ ) osim % proteina u mleku gde nisu ustanovljena značajna variranja ( $P > 0.05$ ). Sezona u kojoj su krave bile oteljene prouzrokovala je visoko značajno odstupanje prinosa mleka ( $P < 0.01$ ) i statistički značajna odstupanja prinosa mlečne masti i proteina ( $P < 0.05$ ). Grla oteljena u decembru, januaru i februaru su proizvela 420 kg mleka više u odnosu na opšti prosek ili 917 kg mleka više u odnosu na krave – prvotelke oteljene u jesenjim mesecima.

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