

Dairy Summary

Extract from Alternative Approaches
to Livestock Health Survey Report

January 2022



Overview of the Use of CAM among Dairy Farmers

From May 2020 till January 2021 Whole Health Agriculture (WHAg) surveyed 221 livestock farmers who use at least one Complementary and Alternative Medicine/Method (CAM) in their livestock health management. The survey was developed in collaboration with, and piloted by, a group of commercial farmers, 4 dairy, 1 sheep, 1 mixed (beef and poultry) farmer.

The responses of 70 commercial dairy farmers who completed the survey are reported in this overview. The minimum unit size per respondent is 10 cows (milkers) and the maximum is 900. (Median number of milking cows per farmer = 150.)

I have not lost any cow to mastitis since I have started using homeopathy



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Results of Using CAMs

Health and antibiotic usage

I was able to take a different perspective on health and a deeper understanding of the importance of a healthy environment

67%

OF DAIRY FARMERS EXPERIENCED
**LOWER DISEASE FREQUENCY/
REDUCED SEVERITY OF DISEASE**



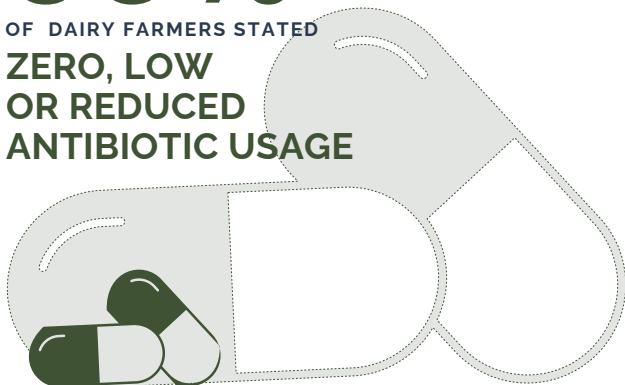
90%

OF DAIRY FARMERS EXPERIENCED
**IMPROVED HERD HEALTH
& WELLBEING**

It has heightened my confidence to take responsibility for the health and wellbeing of my stock

69%

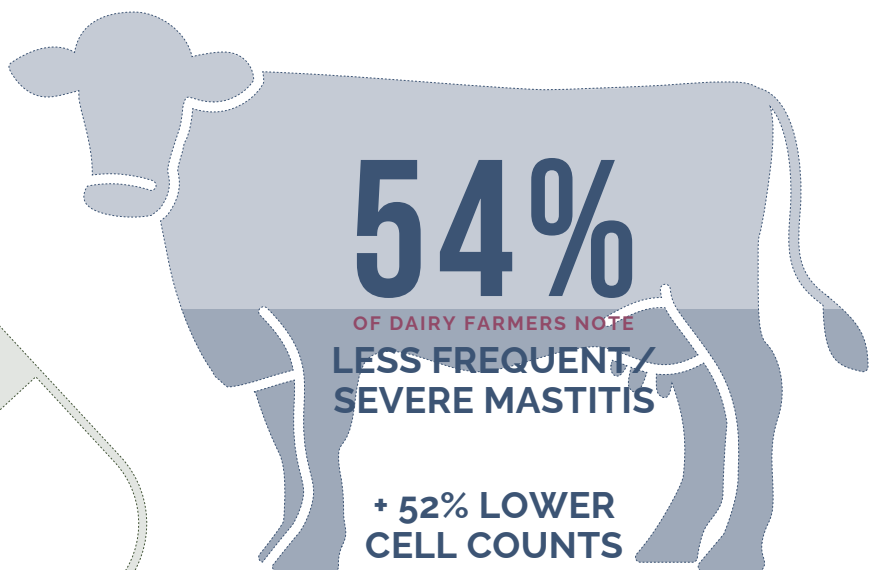
OF DAIRY FARMERS STATED
**ZERO, LOW
OR REDUCED
ANTIBIOTIC USAGE**



54%

OF DAIRY FARMERS NOTE
**LESS FREQUENT/
SEVERE MASTITIS**

**+ 52% LOWER
CELL COUNTS**



Results of Using CAMs

Productivity, Costs & Profitability



69%

OF DAIRY FARMERS STATED
FEWER CASES OF
MILK WITHDRAWAL

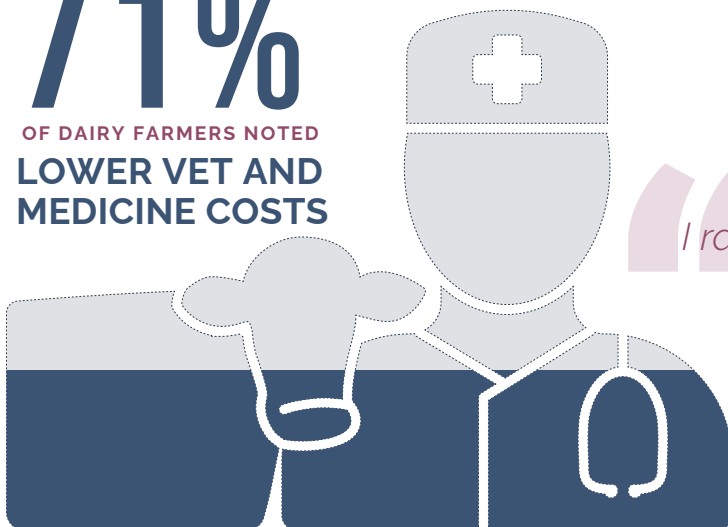


52%

OF DAIRY FARMERS REPORTED
INCREASED FINANCIAL
PROFITABILITY OF
THE FARM

71%

OF DAIRY FARMERS NOTED
LOWER VET AND
MEDICINE COSTS



“I rarely need to use tubes any more”

Results on the Use of CAMs: Dairy Farmers

This question was based on markers that farmers are requested to report, and/or consider to be important.

	Total	Dairy
Improved general health and wellbeing of livestock	84%	90%
Lower vet and medicine costs	66%	71%
Zero, low or reduced antibiotic usage	65%	69%
Fewer incidences of milk withdrawal	26%	69%
Lower disease frequency and/or reduced severity of disease	65%	67%
Reduced frequency or severity of mastitis	30%	54%
Lower cell counts	20%	52%
Increased financial profitability of farm	33%	52%
Higher fertility rate	22%	40%
Reduced frequency or severity of lameness	36%	40%
Lower cull rate/re-stocking rate	26%	36%
Zero, low or reduced wormer usage	40%	31%
Higher live birth rate	24%	22%

The calves come back stronger following homeopathic treatment. Having seen the results, the staff are now willing to bring protocols for treating mastitis into the parlour

Summary of the Use of CAMs among Dairy Farmers

As an industry, dairy farmers are under unique pressure in relation to antibiotic usage. Many milk suppliers (themselves under pressure from their buyers) are setting ambitiously low usage targets, and some organic milk buyers are making Produced Without Antibiotics (PWAB) a requirement of membership.

'Antibiotic-free' is becoming a buzz word among conscious consumers where the dairy industry is also being squeezed by the rise of 'healthier' plant-based alternatives.

For the dairy farmer wanting to make changes, without compromising welfare, there is insufficient information, support or training offering effective alternative health solutions. There is clearly a gap between demand and what is available to health-conscious farmers.

Based on global health needs, dairy industry trends, and the result of this survey, WHAg strongly recommends that the potential for CAM-led approaches to dairy cow and calf health are further investigated and documented. Furthermore, that dairy farmers seeking alternatives are better supported, particularly by industry bodies.

I had a meeting with my accountant today and he said to me wide eyed: "Your veterinary expenses are very impressive, down by a whopping 64% on the previous year"

Our milk buyer has asked the whole supplier group to work towards zero use of critical antibiotics and reduced use of them generally. Apparently this is due to the increased questioning coming from their buyers

Contact details

Stay in touch via:

 secretary@wholehealthag.org

 [@wholehealthag](https://www.facebook.com/wholehealthag)

 [@whole_health_ag](https://www.instagram.com/whole_health_ag)

 [@WholeHealth_Ag](https://twitter.com/WholeHealth_Ag)

For further information on Whole Health Agriculture and to read the full report, please visit:

For progressive farm education, including training, membership and support services, visit our Learning Hub

