

Changes in the routine management on weekends do not affect the reactivity of milking buffaloes

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It is known in dairy buffaloes' production that small changes in the milking routine can lead to a change in the behavior of the animals. This can guide to a lower milk production. In this context, the evaluation of the reactivity of lactating buffaloes can serve as an indicator of changes in the routine management. Thus, the aim of this study was to evaluate whether there are any variation in the total time of milking and in the animals' reactivity in different days of the week. The study was conducted at farm Gondwana, located in Ribeirão Preto-SP. The milking time was computed from the entrance of the animal to its exit from the milking parlour. The reactivity of the animals were observed for two weeks, with assessments on Mondays and Fridays, and during weekends (Saturdays and Sundays). A scoring scale was used, as follows : E1= when the buffalo remained with both hind paws motionless during liners placement ; E2= when the buffalo moves one or both hind paws without lifting them above 15 cm from the floor; E3= when the buffalo makes strong movements with one or two hind paws, lifting them above 15 cm from the floor; E4= when the buffalo makes strong movements with both hind paws, lifting them 15 cm above from the floor and trying to take the liners off and E5= when is necessary to tie the animal's hind paws , for placing the liners. 83 animals were evaluated per day. Observations were made directly and continuously at the time of the placement of the liners. It was used the Friedman test with Bonferroni correction for statistical analysis, performed in SAS. Significant differences were found between week days ($F = 97.64$ $p < 0.001$) for total milking time. On weekends, the animals remained less time in the milking parlour, (14 ± 1.05 min.) than on Mondays (19 ± 2.82 min.) and Fridays (18 ± 2.05 min.). On the other hand, there were no significant differences ($F = 0.87$ $p < 0.45$) between days of the week in the reactivity of the milking buffaloes. It was concluded that although there was no difference in routine management, reduced milking time on weekends did not affect the reactivity of the animals.

Key Words: Buffaloes, behavior, human-animal relationship.