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Dairy sheep udder measurements and assessments in the Czech Republic

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The introduction of machine milking to dairy sheep industry evokes the requirement to pay more attention on morphological and functional characteristics of udders. For this reason the methodology of udder measurements and assessment were proposed for dairy sheep breeding scheme in the Czech Republic. Udder depth (UD), udder width (UW) and teat length (TL) are measured by ruler. Teat placement (TP), udder cleft (UC), rear udder attachment (RA) and fore udder attachment (FA) are subjectively assessed by linear scoring using 9-points scale. In 2018 the udder assessment methodology was implemented in recorded Lacaune population in the Czech Republic. According to preliminary results the correlation between udder width and breeding values for milk production during milking period was $r=0.443$. Genetic evaluation based on measured and subjectively assessed udder traits could become an effective tool in selection programs aimed at improvement of udder morphology in dairy ewes in the future.

Keywords: sheep, dairy, udder, linear score