Selection against Metabolic Diseases

B. Heringstad¹, J.E. Pryce², K.L. Parker Gaddis³, A. Koeck⁴, C. Bastin⁵, M. Abdelsayed⁶, N. Gengler⁵, F. Miglior⁴,⁷, C. Egger-Danner⁸, K.F. Stock⁹, A.J. Bradley¹⁰ & J.B. Cole¹¹

¹Norwegian University of Life Sciences, Ås, Norway
²La Trobe University, VIC, Australia
³University of Florida, USA
⁴University of Guelph, Guelph, Canada
⁵University of Liège, Gembloux, Belgium
⁶Holstein Australia, VIC, Australia
⁷Canadian Dairy Network, Guelph, Canada
⁸ZuchtData, Vienna, Austria
⁹VIT, Verden, Germany
¹⁰University of Nottingham, UK
¹¹USDA, Beltsville MD, USA

ICAR congress 2016, Puerto Varas, October 2016
Metabolic diseases

• Disturbances or dysfunction of metabolic processes
• Can be improved by genetic selection.
  – Direct selection based on clinically observed traits
  – Indirect selection using indicators or predictors

Aim:
• Review of genetic parameters for metabolic diseases
• Give a status of genetic evaluation of metabolic diseases
• Discuss possible indicator traits
Metabolic diseases

The health key in “ICAR guidelines for recording, evaluation and genetic improvement of health traits in dairy cattle” 72 metabolic conditions

The most prevalent:

- Ketosis
- Displaced abomasum
- Milk fever
- Tetany

Published genetic parameters
**Ketosis**
- Negative energy balance and mobilization of body fat
- Accumulation of ketone bodies in blood, milk and other body fluids
- Reduced appetite leads to a vicious cycle of worsening negative energy balance and ketosis

**Displaced abomasum**
- Stretching of the abomasal attachments during gestation and increased space in the abdominal cavity after calving.
- Due to reduced motility of the abomasum, it fills with gas and then displaces
- Accompanied by torsion, gas accumulation increases and drives displacement further.

**Milk fever / hypocalcemia**
- Characterized by very low blood calcium.
- Clinical signs: lower-than-normal body temperature, partial or complete paralysis,
- Subclinical milk fever is diagnosed by decreased serum calcium.

**Tetany / hypomagnesemia**
- The amount of magnesium is insufficient for maintenance of regular muscle function.
- Clinical signs: changes in behavior, muscle spasms, convulsions, and paralysis.
- Can lead to sudden death.
Heritability

Heritability estimates of clinical metabolic diseases (review by Pryce et al., 2016)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Threshold model</th>
<th>Linear model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ketosis</td>
<td>0.02-0.16</td>
<td>0.01-0.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Displaced abomasum</td>
<td>0.12-0.35</td>
<td>0.00-0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk fever</td>
<td>0.07-0.18</td>
<td>0.01-0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tetany</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Breed: HF, NR, FL
Data: Veterinary treatment, farmer recorded
No of cows: 2000 – 370,000
No of lactations
Genetic correlations among metabolic diseases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Displaced abomasum</td>
<td>0.45 – 0.79</td>
<td>Zwald et al., 2004; Parker Gaddis et al., 2014; Jamrozik et al., 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk fever</td>
<td>0.19 – 0.45</td>
<td>Heringstad et al., 2005; Ederer, 2014</td>
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Positive genetic correlations – possible favorable correlated selection response

Norwegian University of Life Sciences
Genetic correlations to other diseases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ketosis</th>
<th>Displaced abomasum</th>
<th>Milk fever</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retained placenta</td>
<td>-0.21 – 0.26</td>
<td>-0.07 – 0.42</td>
<td>-0.04 – 0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cystic ovaries</td>
<td>-0.19 – 0.42</td>
<td>-0.11 – 0.26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lameness</td>
<td>-0.10 – 0.25</td>
<td>-0.13 – 0.31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mastitis</td>
<td>-0.20 – 0.36</td>
<td>0.02 – 0.20</td>
<td>0.12 – 0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metritis</td>
<td>0.17 – 0.32</td>
<td>0.08 – 0.44</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Wide range of estimates
Mostly positive correlations
Limited number of studies

(Pryce et al., 2016)
Genetic correlations with milk production

Wide range of estimates
Lack of consistency
Limited number of studies
Small datasets
Large SE

(Figure from Pryce et al., 2016)
Example of correlated selection response for ketosis in selection lines of Norwegian Red selected for high milk production and low clinical mastitis (from Heringstad et al., 2007)
Genetic Evaluation - status

- **Norway**: ketosis and milk fever included in “other diseases”, a sub-index of the Total Merit Index of Norwegian Red since 1978.

- **Denmark, Finland and Sweden** (joint evaluation): metabolic diseases included in “other diseases”, a sub-index of the Nordic Total Merit.

- **Austria (and Germany)**: Routine genetic evaluation of milk fever and preliminary evaluation for other metabolic diseases in Fleckvieh since 2010, Brown Swiss since 2013. For German Holsteins, the prototype includes ketosis, milk fever and left-displaced abomasum.

- **Canada**: genetic evaluations for metabolic diseases (clinical and subclinical ketosis and displaced abomasum) for Holstein, Ayrshire and Jersey will be implemented in December 2016.
Correlated selection response for ketosis in the Norwegian Red population (from Heringstad et al., 2007)

Genetic improvement of clinical mastitis

Positive genetic correlation CM-KET

Correlated response in ketosis
Genetic Evaluation

- Direct selection requires large-scale recording of disease traits
- Alternatively, indicators of metabolic diseases can provide information to be used in genetic evaluation

Genomic selection:

- Use information from later lactations (e.g. milk fever)
- Genotyping cows + high resolution phenotyping in selected herds
Possible indicator traits

Challenges related to
  – Disease recording
  – Under-reporting
  – Diagnosis of subclinical cases

Predictors can be used for genetic evaluation, diagnosis of subclinical cases, risk assessment and herd management.

Increased interest in predictors
Possible indicator traits

• Sensor data
• Milk or blood tests, such as β-Hydroxybutyrate (BHB), other biomarkers
• Changes in body condition score (BCS)
• Changes in body weight
• Predictors based on data from routine milk recording (e.g., milk mid-infrared spectral data, MIR, fat: protein ratio)
Automation and Sensor data

• Increased automation and use of advanced sensors
  new opportunities and solutions
• Advanced management systems
  – combine data from multiple sources
  – predict risk and detect possible health problems
  – reliabilities not always convincing
• Monitoring rumination patterns – early predictor
• Association to negative energy balance
  – Automated weighing and automated scoring of BCS (camera)
    • frequent and objective measures of new phenotypes
    • assessment of energy balance
• Moderate genetic correlations between metabolic diseases and both
  BCS and body weight change (Dechow et al. 2004; Jamrozik et al. 2016; Frigo et al., 2010).
MIR of milk samples

- Evaluate subclinical disease
- Potential for large scale recording - established and used in routine milk recording
- Useful for screening purposes (healthy cows vs. cows at risk)
- Prediction accuracy insufficient for ketosis parameters (e.g., de Roos et al., 2007; Grelet et al., 2016b).
- Used to predict energy balance (McParland et al., 2014).
Indicators of ketosis

• Ketosis (clinical and subclinical) affects 40-60 % of dairy cows, average cost of $289 per case in USA (AgSource, 2016)

• BHB in blood – standard diagnosis of ketosis
  – Expensive, not practical for large scale

• BHB and acetone in milk
  – Prediction from milk MIR

• Genetic correlation 0.37-0.75 between clinical ketosis and milk BHB 1st testday (Koeck et al 2014; 2015; Jamrozik et al, 2016)

• Combine information from different sources to increase accuracy

• Indicators of subclinical ketosis useful for genetic evaluation
Conclusion

• Direct selection to reduce metabolic diseases is possible
• Lack of recording of direct disease traits is a challenge.
• Several potential indicator traits have been suggested
• New phenotypes, including better tools for diagnosis of subclinical cases, may support more efficient selection against metabolic diseases.
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