Press release for EuroTier 2018

DGL silver medal awarded to “VitalControl” health management system

Calves are very sensitive to diseases of all kinds during their first days of life. The earlier infections are detected, the faster the animals will recover. Daily calf health monitoring and documentation accompanied by temperature measurement as appropriate, is often not yet a routine on the farms. Urban is now offering a new DLG medal-winning solution.

Urban GmbH & Co. KG has developed a practical tool for calf health monitoring: VitalControl, a hand-held device for measuring body temperature and evaluating calf health. It comes with an integrated keypad and a high-contrast colour screen. During routine calf barn tours, the farmer will use VitalControl to scan the animal number from the transponder and measure body temperature. The device will classify the result into a green, yellow or red status category. Further health-relevant parameters can be evaluated visually and documented, such as consistency of faeces, respiratory diseases, general health status, etc. The software generates alarm lists from the recorded data, processes all entered data into easy-to-read graphics and can be linked to the Urban feeder so that drinking behaviour can also be included into the animal assessment. In this way, the calf health can be reliably assessed and documented and diseases can be detected earlier. For work monitoring, each of the measurements and assessments can be tracked and assigned to the employee who entered them into the system.

The long measuring tip of the VitalControl is slim and made of flexible material, so that the measurement takes place in sufficient depth and is not unpleasant for the animal. The head of the device can be rotated, which makes the handling and insertion of the measuring tip much easier. In addition, the thermometer has an integrated light that shines towards the measuring tip to facilitate handling even in poorly lit areas of the barn.

The waterproof device has a powerful rechargeable battery and data interfaces (USB; WLAN; WiFi) for transferring the data to a computer or an automatic feeder.

For this tool designed for health control and digital data management, which can also be used in other animal species and production branches, Urban GmbH & Co. KG was awarded by the DLG with the silver Innovation Award of the EuroTier 2018.

Additional photos and information in digital format can be found here: https://www.urbanonline.de/aktuelles/neuheiten/
Picture 1: Health monitoring with Urban VitalControl

Picture 2: Easy handling in calves
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Novelty from Urban:
Alma Pro automatic calf feeder now provides single-station feeding and many additional functions are now available

In addition to group feeding, the tried and tested Alma Pro automatic feeder can now also be used for feeding calves which are housed individually (in calf hutches, calf huts) in a fully automated and tailored manner. One feeder can supply up to 16 hutches, or 8 hutches plus 2 feeding stations (groups). A new feature is the FIT sensor: It measures the milk quantity consumed by the calf accurately to the millilitre and also monitors the drinking behaviour of the calf.

The contactless FIT sensor makes it possible to dispense with the previously used storage cups at the station and simplifies and streamlines the system design considerably, thus also offering significant advantages in terms of hygiene. Up to four calves can drink in parallel at four suction points. This avoids waiting times at the suction points and significantly increases the capacity of the feeder. With the Alma Pro Duo model, two different calf milk replacers (CMRs) can be fed in any mixing ratio.

Operation and data retrieval via touchscreen, smartphone or PC are extremely simple. As an alternative to the 12-inch touchscreen, an 8-inch screen is now also available.

Optionally, it is possible to equip the feeder with a so-called hygiene station: The movable teat of this station swivels into a vertical position after each drinking process, where it can be cleaned with water and optionally with a disinfectant. Sucking on an empty teat is avoided, which increases the throughput at the station. Another new feature is that up to four hygiene stations can be connected to one feeder.

Also new is a platform scale for recording the weight of the animals either in the pen or in the feed alley or passageway. The scale can be linked to the automatic feeder and transmits the recorded weight values directly to the feeder. The feeder then calculates and visualises the daily weight gain of the animals – the most important performance parameter in calf rearing. The scale can be folded up and stands on castors for easy transport.

A new animal evaluation app has been developed at the University of Wisconsin Veterinary School of Medicine (USA). With the help of this app, health parameters such as respiratory diseases, nasal discharge, eye discharge, and ear position can be evaluated individually for each animal.
In cooperation with Urban, this app was first translated into German. In a second step, a link between the app and the Urban automatic feeder was implemented. The feeder sends a “monitoring list” of animals to be evaluated to the app. After the farmer has carried out the evaluation within the app, the collected data can be transferred back to the feeder and be permanently stored in the animal history.

With the new Alma Pro automatic feeder, whole milk or milk replacer feed can be fed to small or large groups of animals in small portions and always at the right temperature around the clock, saving time. Interesting optional additional functions such as the hygiene station, the calf scale, the animal evaluation app or the new 8-inch touch screen make the Alma Pro an indispensable tool for rearing calves.

Additional photos and information in digital format can be found here:
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Picture 1: Easy weighing with the platform scale
Picture 2: Single-station feeding

Picture 3: Evaluation App for calves
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New: Alma Pro L – Urban’s portfolio now includes an automatic feeder for lambs

Sometimes, not all lambs from a multiple birth can be suckled by their mothers. Successful motherless rearing of lambs by hand is very labour-intensive and time-consuming. Experts recommend feeding the animals restrictively several times a day with small amounts, as this prevents diarrhoea, promotes the growth of the lambs and supports the development of a healthy, high-performance adult animal. This is due to the so-called metabolic programming, which has a very positive effect on metabolic processes later in life and ensures constant daily weight gain.

The Alma Pro L automatic feeder supports sheep and goat farmers in this task by supplying milk at the right temperature (milk replacer / whole milk) to the lambs flexibly around the clock taking into account their needs and welfare.

Operation and data retrieval via the integrated swivel touch screen are very simple: Depending on its individual age, each animal is allocated the right amount of milk which is distributed throughout the day.

Alma Pro L records a wide range of health parameters related to the drinking behaviour of each individual lamb. Changes in drinking behaviour can be a sign of a beginning disease. Alma Pro L registers these changes and puts the respective animal on an alarm list. This enables the animal keeper to react at an early stage. Alarm lists and other animal- and feeder-related data can even be retrieved via a smartphone.

In addition to optimum feed composition and frequency, feeding hygiene plays a decisive role: Alma Pro L cleans the entire hose system and all milk-carrying parts alternating two different cleaning agents. The cleaning process is fully automatic, thorough and reliable.

The double feeding station equipped with antennae recognises each lamb by the corresponding ear tag with transponder. The station is adjustable in width and height and grows with the lambs. The new FIT sensor enables parallel feeding at both suction points while simultaneously monitoring the consumed milk quantity. Each Alma Pro L feeder can supply up to 4 double feeding stations for lambs.

Additional photos and information in digital format can be found here:
https://www.urbanonline.de/aktuelles/neuheiten/
Picture 1: Lamb feeding with Urban Alma Pro L

Picture 2: feeding groups of lambs with Urban Alma Pro L