

## Motives and barriers to providing outdoor access for dairy cows

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Canadian citizens view outdoor access as an important element for dairy cow welfare. Dairy cows are highly motivated to access pasture, especially at night. A recent study on alternative types of outdoor access showed that dairy cows also prefer to access an outdoor bedded pack at night. However, approximately 35% of the lactating and 65% of the dry cows in Canada are provided access to pasture; numbers on the use of alternative outdoor areas are unknown. We aim to understand the motives and barriers of dairy farmers to provide lactating dairy cows access to pasture and to other forms of outdoor areas. We will recruit approximately 50 Alberta dairy producers to participate in semi-structured interviews, including those who 1) do not provide outdoor access, 2) do provide outdoor access, 3) do not provide outdoor access now but did so within the past 10 years, and 4) do provide outdoor access now but did not do so within the past 10 years. Interview questions will be designed to assess perceived barriers and motives to providing different forms of outdoor access. **Take home messages:** Only a minority of lactating dairy cows are provided outdoor access in Canada, despite outdoor access being highly valued by cows and by the Canadian public at large. We aim to understand the perceived barriers and motives for implementing outdoor access by producers.