

Vet's Corner: Anovular Cows

The anovular cow is defined as not returning to regular estrus cycles following calving.

At the Elite Dairy Team Conference, Dr. Richard Pursley, Michigan State University, reports that the rate of anovular cows can range from 10-40% at 50-75 Days In Milk. As expected, calving difficulty, Metritis, Ketosis, and DA's lead to higher anovular cow rates. The best predictor of anovulation is a low Body Condition Score. Again as expected, BCS <2.75 had anovular rate of 40%, but more importantly, **cows in the desirable BCS >3.25 had 10% cows that were not cycling by 75 DIM.** So anovular cows occur in all herds.

For herds that use Timed Artificial Insemination, it is common to perform the first pregnancy check around 110 DIM after the first time insemination. If Resynch (GnRH injected 7 days prior to preg check) is used, open cows are expected to have a functional CL to be luteinized by a prostaglandin injection. If Resynch is not used, the cow is expected to have a regressed CL and approaching a natural heat. In the field, it is frustrating because we find many cows that do not fit these patterns. In herds, with good BCS and few fresh cow problems, 5-10% of the open cows will be anovular and not be in the expected estrus pattern. If >10% of the open cows don't fit the pattern, spend some time on the diagnosis of the cause of anovular cows.

DIM	Control	Pregnancy Rate %	
		Ovsynch	Total
50-75	39.4	26.0	31.3
>76	38.8	43.4	41.0

The results of Dr. Pursley's comparison of cows bred on signs of natural heat vs. Ovsynch indicate 17% drop in preg rate for cows on Ovsynch in the 50-75 DIM group. By definition cows in the control group can not be anovular because they have been observed to be in estrus and should be the most fertile cattle in the milking herd. By starting Ovsynch less than 76 DIM, anovular cows, this can not become impregnated. are being forced into the breeding program and are responsible for the lower pregnancy rate. Check out the 1st Service %Successful rate in your herd, if it is not higher than 2nd and later Service's Successful Rate, consider raising VWP to keep anovular cows out the TAI program.

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