

Vet's Corner:

For the past two months, pregnancy rates at many herd health checks have been subnormal. More open cows are presented for pregnancy diagnosis than normal because heat stress has suppressed expression of estrus signs by these non-pregnant cows. With the return of cooler fall weather, it is hoped that more cows that need to be rebred will show heats and not be presented for unsuccessful pregnancy diagnosis. Unfortunately, conception rates will take a few more months to normalize, so an increased number of successful breedings don't occur until late September and October.

During summer heat, poor fertility is expected, so it is important to create a plan with the herd health Veterinarian to focus on finding the increased number of repeat breeders at the earliest possible time. Several options are available to the dairyperson to get these more numerous unsuccessful breeders inseminated again faster:

1. Traditionally, **open cows have received a prostaglandin shot on herd health day** if the Veterinarian can palpate a viable CL. Careful attention is focused on this cluster of rebreeding cows two to five days following preg ck/prostaglandin injection. Since heat stress is suppressing estrus signs, only modest results can be expected. Heat patches and tail chalking are strongly suggested.
2. Slow-release progesterone implants (CIDR's) are approved to use in repeat breeding mature milking cows. **The CIDR is implanted in all cows that are bred 14 days following A.I. service and removed on day 20.** Again the dairyperson must focus on the cluster of rebreeding cows for one to three days following CIDR removal... It is assumed that pregnant cows don't show heat and a higher proportion of the unsuccessful breeders will show up for rebreeding at an earlier time than waiting 28-42 days for Veterinarian palpation.
3. On herd health day, **all cows diagnosed open can be started on Ovsynch.** (Any cow showing heat before the 10-day Ovsynch protocol is complete is rebred and no further shots are given.) This method insures that all open cows are rebred and does not rely on heat detection by the dairyperson, which is being impaired by heat stress. Currently, this is the most popular method of "resynching" cows found open on herd health day.
4. A proactive method to quickly rebred open cows which we expect in higher numbers during summer heat is **to inject all cows for pregnancy diagnosis a week before herd health day with GnRH.** The GnRH has no effect on the pregnancy status of successfully bred cows. Cows found open are immediately injected with Prostaglandin and given GnRH two days later and bred 0-24 hours later, which is only two to three days following open diagnosis. The cost of the GnRH injection is similar to one day's cost of feeding an open milking cow, so the shots to pregnant cows should not be considered a waste in comparison to the value of getting more timely services into repeat breeders.

Kent E Henderson, DVM

Northwest Veterinary Associates, Inc.

cowdoc@adelphia.net