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DIVISION OF RESEARCH & EXTENSION

Knowing when your cow is ready for Insemination

Early heat detection will save you money

Poor heat detection may mean servicing a cow too early or too late and reducing chances for pregnancy. Timely insemination will give you more calves and milk and thus impact on your farm returns. Therefore spend some time observing your cows to be sure of when to serve.



Swollen vulva and tail on one side

Why Early Heat Detection is Important

Good heat detection will save you costs of repeating inseminations and your cow will calf on time and give you milk for food and for sale. A cow will only show heat signs when ready to be served. Normally, this will occur every 21 days on average, within a range of 17 to 24 days. Do closely observe cows early in the mornings and late evenings because this is when they best express the behavioural signs.

Signs that a cow is ready for Insemination

1. She has clear mucus hanging from the vulva in a long string.
2. Her vulva will look swollen and red in colour
3. Her tail will be slightly raised to one side
4. She mounts others and will stand still when mounted
5. She might have the skin on her back exposed and her back is dirty.
6. Again, she will move up and down and look not interested in eating.
7. This cow will also sniff others and drop the quantity of milk she gives.
8. If you observe many of these signs in the morning, inseminate her in the evening and if you observe them in the evening, inseminate her early next morning.



Mounting is a sign of heat

When to Inseminate after Calving

Give your cows some rest after calving to allow her reproductive tract heal well then inseminate after about 90 days after calving. At this time, a cow will have regained her lost body condition if your feeding regime has been adequate. When a cow has regained lost body condition, they are able to show strong heat signs and this is important for ease of heat detection and for successful insemination.

Remember the longer the cow remains open the longer she is unproductive yet you are incurring cost of feeding, labour and health. Early insemination when successful will reduce the number of inseminations and increase conception rates thereby reducing the length of calving interval. A cow served more than two times before successful conception may indicate fertility problem. In such cases, seek professional help from a veterinarian.

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