

POST-CALVING TREATMENT TO IMPROVE CONCEPTION

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One of the major economic losses to the dairyman is decreased milk production resulting from failure of cows to be ready to conceive within 60 days after calving. The cause of the impaired fertility is complex. Nutrition, management and disease control - along with genetic selection for improved breeding efficiency - are important in the solution of the delayed conception problem. In spite of numerous claims, no simple treatment, as routine hormone injections, uterine infusions or feed additives have proven effective.

This problem can best be solved by a team approach involving the nutritionist, the dairyman and a veterinarian. The nutritionist should select rations balanced to prevent excess ketogenic substances from accumulating in the post parturient cow, and levels that minimize digestive disturbances.

The dairyman must observe cattle for abnormal uterine discharge and manifestations of heat.

The veterinarian should conduct routine uterine palpations on all cows approximately 30 days after calving, and treat those cows with delayed uterine involution or uterine infections.

At the time of the uterine examination, the size and location on the ovary of follicles, corpus luteum or cysts should be recorded. Follow-up examinations should be made on all cows not exhibiting heat by the 60th day following calving, and appropriate treatment should be initiated at this time. Repeated examinations and treatments at 7 to 14 day intervals will generally enable the veterinarian to correct the condition and cause the cow to establish regular heat cycles.

Pregnancy examinations 40 to 60 days after breeding are extremely important in any breeding program. Frequently a retained corpus luteum or the failure to observe heats in a cow will lead to the assumption that the cow is settled. These cases can be detected by the routine early rectal palpation of the uterus, and corrective measures will decrease the additional time lost in delayed conception.