



Ask the VMD

Leon Riegel

Tim Trayer

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A reader asks: We recently purchased two Polled Hereford cows, with calves at their sides, that were supposed to be bred last June. Just the other week, about a month after we weaned the calves, the one cow began to ride the other. There were no other signs of heat. Is this behavior unusual. Is it safe

to have the cow pregnancy tested this late in her "gestation"? Is there any other sign we can look for to tell if the cow is bred? What are the symptoms and causes of false heat?

Dr. Riegel comments: The typical signs of heat, or estrus, in cattle are: restlessness; a slight decrease in appetite,

rumination, and milk production; standing to be ridden by other cows and attempting to ride other cows herself; slight elevation of her tail; and strings of clear mucus hanging from the vulva, or present on the tail or hindquarters.

Although cattle are polyestrous, meaning they will cycle all year long when they are not pregnant, some cows show no clinical sign of heat when their calves are nursing. But, as soon as the calf is weaned, the cow will then begin to show outward signs.

Therefore, it would be advisable to have your cows checked for pregnancy by a veterinarian performing a rectal examination. The procedure is relatively safe, and can be done any time after 42 days up until the day of calving. It is important to have a substantial facility to confine the cow while the exam is being done.

To have a cow show signs of heat during her pregnancy is not normal, but it is not extremely unusual either. False heats occur when the cows estrogen, the normal hormones produced by a cow, override the progesterones produced by

State hort meeting coming

LANCASTER — The annual state-wide fruit meetings are scheduled for January 29-30-31, 1980 at the Hershey Motor Lodge and Convention Center in nearby Hershey.

A feature of the beginning session on Tuesday morning, January 29, will include: a review of current labor regulations; training supervisors and grower-management relations to harvest situations.

Tuesday afternoon will include discussions on: controlled atmosphere for the storage of fruits and vegetables; Why should I buy your apples, a chain store buyer speaks; North Carolina orchard changes; and application problems with growth regulators.

Wednesday morning is to be devoted to several discussions of: experiences with peach varieties; nectarines; and disease control programs for these fruits.

On Wednesday afternoon participants will hear about: growth regulation of fruit quality; grower evaluation of trellis plantings; the high

the corpus luteum, the yellow body, of pregnancy.

Each year we find a certain number of cows that appear to be having an abnormal estrus cycle. They show all the signs of being in heat at 21-day intervals through most, and sometimes all, of their gestation period.

density approach analysis; and pollination of apples.

The windup Thursday morning sessions will be on plant and fruit protection against pests. At the same time there will be: small fruit discussions; weed control in bramble plan-

tings; raspberry variety evaluation; and weed control in strawberries.

A big trade show will be on display downstairs. Vegetable and grape growers will also be holding their state annual meetings within the Center.

Chris Erb to speak at Farm-Home

LANCASTER — Christine Erb, Mount Joy, will be the featured speaker for the 1980 annual meeting of the Farm and Home Foundation to be held at the Farm and Home Center on Thursday, January 31, at 6:30 p.m.

Chris returned in December from a six-month stay in Japan where she lived and worked with farm families. She will tell about her adventures in Japan and show slides of that country.

While in Japan, Chris lived with 17 host families and learned about their rural youth organization and their agriculture. Chris is now working at home in the

poultry operation of her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Wilbur Erb. She is a former Lancaster County 4-H'er.

Vocal selections will be provided by Jeanette Martin, New Holland.

Included in the evening's program will be a brief business meeting, and the election of directors.

Tickets are \$6.00 and can be purchased from directors of the Farm and Home Foundation or by calling the Farm and Home Center 392-4911 or the Penn State Extension Service. Deadline for reservations is Thursday, January 24, 1980.



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