

Repeat breeder requires special handling program

BY DICK ANGLESTEIN
LANCASTER — The repeat breeder came in for extra attention at a dairy reproduction workshop held Monday and Tuesday at the Farm and Home Center.

And that's exactly what repeat breeders require on the dairy farm — extra, special attention, according to Dr. Larry Hutchinson, Extension veterinarian.

He defined the repeat breeders as those animals requiring three or more services for a pregnancy.

The Extension veterinarian recommended a post-service examination by a vet as the cornerstone of a special program to handle repeat breeders.

"This type of exam is one of the best things that can be done to increase breeding efficiency on the farm," Hutchinson said.

He recommended that the exam be conducted between



Larry Hutchinson

six and 24 hours following service. At this time, an infection or other type of abnormality is more likely to show up. Also, the vet can check whether the animal has ovulated.

"Treat the repeat breeders as a special class of cows," Hutchinson said.

"These animals require

special handling and a special set of procedures to be followed.

He suggested the following guidelines in handling repeat breeders.

First, clearly identify the animals and know them in order to apply the special attention required.

Next, determine the length of their estrous cycle. While this may vary, the cycle tends to follow a specified pattern.

Then, determine the length of heat of the particular animals, which can range from 12 to 48 hours. Don't assume they will follow the normal duration of 18 hours.

After completing these determinations, make an effort to better plan the time of service and breed at the right time.

For particularly long heats, double breeding might be helpful.

As a final recommendation, Hutchinson said

that high fertility bulls should be used for repeat breeders to take advantage of their higher non-return rate.

Hutchinson also discussed the problem of cystic cows during the two-day reproduction workshop.

He said that the incidence toward cysts appears to be related to several factors, including genetics, nutrition particularly an imbalance of high calcium and low phosphorus, estrogen and the level of milk production with higher producers more susceptible.

Hutchinson said that a workable level of cysts is about 10 percent of a herd annually. But it is not unusual to see levels of 30 to 40 percent in herds.

"If there is a sudden change in the level of cysts, look at the diet," Hutchinson said.

"If there is a gradual change, it may be due to genetics."

A lot of cases of cysts can go away about 30 to 60 days after calving, he explained.

Problems can develop in higher producers when they are held off from breeding. A cow permitted to stay open has an increased chance of becoming cystic.

In answer to a question, Hutchinson said that more

breeding problems appear to occur in animals not out on pasture. Fresh forage can help provide the nutritional safeguards to help prevent cysts.

Hormone treatment is the preferred therapy for cysts, but it is not completely effective. It is about 70 percent effective.

Milk production up six percent

HARRISBURG — Milk production in Pennsylvania during December 1980 totaled 718 million pounds, up six percent from a year earlier, according to the Pennsylvania Crop Reporting Service.

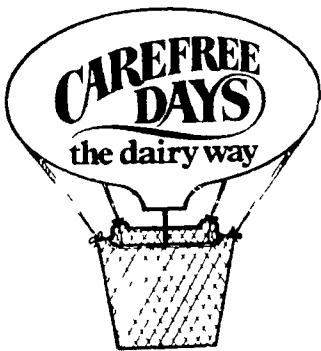
The number of milk cows in the Commonwealth during December was 718,000 head, up 8000 head from a year ago.

Milk production per cow averaged 1000 pounds in December, up 50 pounds from a year ago.

United States milk production during December totaled 10.4 billion pounds, four percent above December 1979.

Milk production per cow averaged 958 pounds, 27 pounds more than a year earlier and 62 pounds above December 1978.

Milk cows on farms totaled 10.9 million, one percent above last year.



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