

# Is your heat detection plan accurate?

**UNIVERSITY PARK** — Studies indicate that approximately 20 percent of the cows presented for artificial insemination are not in heat. Michael L. O'Connor, Penn State Extension dairy specialist, offers 10 suggestions for improving heat detection:

## Corn

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hybrids could be developed quickly whenever a disease threat occurs.

To get a broader genetic diversity in the new lines, the researchers crossed Central American corn plants known as Mayorbela with "elite domestic lines." Warren said the 10-year research span was necessary to produce the final products offering disease resistance and other agronomically desirable traits.

The scientist first had to adapt early-maturing Mayorbela corn plants to the early growing seasons of the Corn Belt. He then crossed the Central American plants with domestic lines, selecting the best plants from each pairing to self-pollinate a new generation until he developed the new lines, H110 and H111.

Warren said the two lines now are available to corn breeders.

✓ Cows in conventional housing should be turned out twice daily once in the morning and again later in the evening - for at least 15 minutes each time.

✓ Loose housing does not make heat detection easier. Check cows for signs of heat at least three times a day, more frequently if possible. Schedule these observation periods so as to avoid feeding times and times when cattle are moving to and from milking.

✓ Remember that most mounting occurs between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m., and that 25 percent of the cows are in heat less than eight hours. Use your time efficiently and check heat during times when cattle are most like to express it.

✓ Slippery and muddy conditions will inhibit mounting activity. Provide an area where cows are free to interact, with good footing and few obstacles.

✓ Cows with sore feet and legs make heat detection more difficult. These cows may not engage in mounting activity or may stand to be mounted when not in heat because it is too painful to avoid the mounting cow. Keep hoofs trimmed and treat infected feet as

soon as the problem is noticed.

✓ Appoint one person to be responsible for heat detection and allow time to do the job properly. However, train all personnel to recognize the signs of heat and report information promptly to the responsible person.

✓ Use a pocket notebook to record all heats and other cow information. Then record heats on the heat expectancy chart and on the cows permanent record sheet. Abnormal length cycles and long intervals from freshening to first service should be apparent. Such cows can then be examined by a veterinarian.

✓ Record all heats whether the animal is to be bred or not.

✓ Poor cow identification is one reason why some animals are presented for insemination when they are not in heat. Legible neck chain numbers, large ear tags and freeze brands aid in accurate cow identification.

✓ Consider using heat detection aids to help increase the number of heats detected. Detection devices and detector animals should be used in conjunction with routine visual observations.

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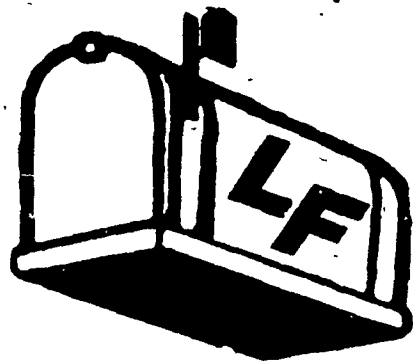
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