

Eliminate errors in heat detection

UNIVERSITY PARK — With the use of progesterone analysis of milk and blood, dairy scientists have recently been able to determine if cows are actually in heat at the time of insemination. Michael L. O'Connor, Penn State Extension dairy specialist, says some studies have indicated that as much as one-fifth of the cows presented for breeding are not in true heat.

"This has been proven by high levels of progesterone at the time of breeding," he explains. "When these cows are bred, conception

rates have been poor."

The Penn State specialist offers some possible reasons why these misbreedings may occur:

Incorrect signs of heat — Breeding cows based on symptoms other than standing heat are the major contributing factor. The only accurate sign of true heat is when a cow stands to be ridden by another animal.

Symptoms such as attempting to ride other animals, restlessness, mucus discharge, reddened swollen genitalia, and other signs are often interpreted as sure signs

of heat. But such signs are not reliable, says O'Connor. They can occur before, during, or after standing heat. However, these secondary signs may be useful in selecting cows to watch more closely for standing heat.

Misidentification — With the size of dairy herds continuing to increase, cow identification becomes a problem. Misidentification of a cow in heat can easily occur when a large number of animals are being observed. O'Connor recommends using heat mount

detectors, large visible ear tags, chalk or crayon markings, and freeze brands to aid identification. Remember to clearly write down the number of the cow in heat so that no one is confused when it is time to breed.

Facilities and location — When checking heat, choose a location that allows animals to freely interact. Obstructions or confinement facilities such as holding pens, alleys, free stalls, or feed bunks can restrict movement. Cows could be forced to stand

while being mounted even though they are not in heat. A small pasture or exercise lot in the vicinity of the barn may be ideal for heat detection.

Date set for
**'83 Delmarva corn,
soybean conference**

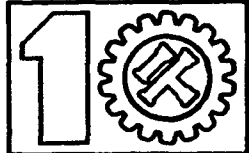
NEWARK, Del. — The 1983 Delmarva Corn and Soybean Conference has been scheduled for Feb. 3 at the Wicomico Youth and Civic Center in Salisbury, Md.

In keeping with the conference theme, "Back to Basics," the program will focus on ways farmers can manage more effectively during these difficult economic times.

There will be talks on developing marketing strategy, controlling escaped weeds in soybeans, machinery safety and common sense management.

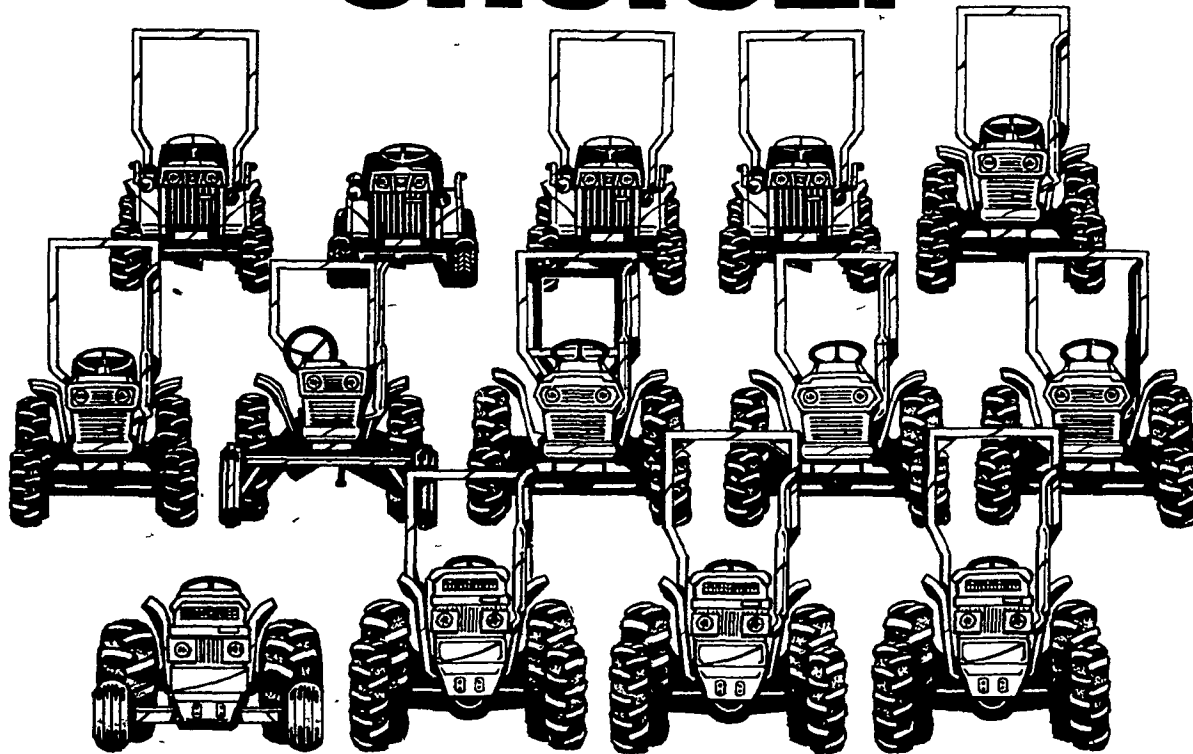
There also will be a series of presentations on soil fertility, including soil testing and minor elements, the use of animal manures, the pros and cons of sludge, and efficient use of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium.

The conference is being sponsored by the Maryland and Delaware Cooperative Extension Services and local agribusiness firms. Watch local papers for further information.



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