

Hernias seldom serious in foals

NEWARK, Del. — Since this is the foaling season, the attention of many horse owners is understandably focused on the health of their young animals. Some of these foals are likely to develop hernias.

According to University of Delaware extension equine specialist Dr. Mel Reitnour, this condition is seldom serious enough to cause unsoundness. Umbilical and scrotal hernias are fairly common. They usually get smaller as the foal matures and sometimes disappear completely by the time it is a yearling.

An umbilical hernia is an opening in the abdominal wall at the umbilicus. A scrotal hernia is similar except that the gut protrudes through the inguinal canal into the scrotum.

A foal's tendency to develop hernias can be hereditary, Reitnour says. Stallions can inherit the genetic weakness from their dams and pass it along to their offspring.

The direct cause of a hernia may be severe straining, chronic coughing or excessive physical restraint. The condition sometimes occurs as the result of a kick or

from strain after slipping or pulling.

Reitnour says umbilical hernias generally aren't dangerous unless they become strangulated, in which case they require surgery. Veterinarians sometimes use a metal clamp to treat a persistent umbilical hernia. The foal is placed briefly under general anesthesia, or given a tranquilizer and local anesthetic, and the clamp is placed around the sac or skin. Deprived of blood, the hernia will eventually shrivel and drop off, leaving the area to heal. If an umbilical hernia is extremely large, however, surgery may be needed.

Scrotal hernias often require surgery, and colts are usually castrated at the same time.

Reitnour recommends that in selecting a stallion for breeding purposes, owners evaluate this background for incidence of hernia. It's wise to avoid breeding horses with a past history of this problem.

As for foals which develop hernias, the specialist advises owners to follow the recommendation of a veterinarian regarding treatment.



American Polled Hereford Association area coordinator Ernie Smith addresses guests during the Maryland association's field day on June 9.

Maryland Polled Hereford Assoc. holds field day

By John Schmidt
Staff Correspondent

ROCKY RIDGE, Md. — The Maryland Polled Hereford Association held its annual field day on Saturday June 9. Calvin Saylor's Oak Grove Farm at Rocky Ridge, Md., provided a fine setting for the more than fifty people who attended. Association president Andy Schmidt welcomed the crowd along with host Saylor.

Guests were invited to participate in a cow-calf mating game and bull weight estimates competition for prizes. The emphasis of the day was on breeding and herd health management.

American Polled Hereford Association Area Coordinator Ernie Smith made remarks concerning APHA future events including the Eastern Regional Junior Heifer Show July 16-18, in Murfreesboro, Tenn., the Eleventh National Junior Polled Hereford Show and Forum in Des Moines, Iowa, the Ohio State Fair Standard of Perfection Show August 11, and the Eastern States Expo in Malery, Mass. September 22.

Following Smith's comments breeders Frank Darcey of Spring Bottom Farm and Bob Dilmer of Graystone Farm presented improved methods of heat detection and artificial insemination. Much of the discussion involved estrus synchronization with related new drugs and techniques.

Dr. William Carr V.M.D. of Emmittsburg spoke before lunch concerning herd health and nutrition in relation to reproductive efficiency.

Lunch was provided by Calvin Saylor and enjoyed by all. It also gave an opportunity for Polled Hereford enthusiasts from as far away as North Carolina, Virginia, Ohio, and Pennsylvania to talk cattle with the many friends and Maryland association members.

Dr. Carr continued the program with a slide series about "Synchronate B", a new estrus synchronization drug. Ernie Smith concluded the program with an explanation and update on APHA performance pedigrees, the annual sire summary, and Guidelines performance systems.

National Junior Polled Hereford Show set for Iowa

DES MOINES, Ia. — In recognition of the 11th National Junior Polled Hereford Heifer Show and Forum, the week of July 22 has been proclaimed Polled Hereford Week in Iowa by Iowa Governor Terry E. Branstad. The fun-filled week-long lineup of activities that brings together young Polled Hereford breeders from all parts of the country is slated for July 22-26 at the state

fairgrounds in Des Moines.

The 11th National junior event, which is sponsored by the American Polled Hereford Association, is one of the largest purebred junior shows in the world. In addition to the highly competitive heifer show, the youth will have the opportunity to participate in a wide variety of educational and fun activities, and many will be recognized for their achievements in Polled Hereford work.

More than 600 heifers have been entered in the show, representing 375 exhibitors from 33 states, ranging from California to New York and Washington to Georgia, plus youth from four Canadian provinces.

The two days of cattle judging will get underway at 8:30 a.m. on Wednesday, July 25, with Governor Brandstad opening the ceremonies. In the competition, juniors from 7 to 21 years old will be showing heifers born in 1983 as well as bred-and-owned cow-calf pairs. They will also put their fitting and showing skills on the line in the individual and team showmanship contests.

For more information on the National Junior Polled Hereford Heifer Show and Forum, contact the American Polled Hereford Association, 4700 E. 63rd St., Kansas City, Mo. 64130.

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Temperature, nutrition, critical for summer hog breeding

NEW YORK, NY — With last year's disrupted breeding schedules and poor sow condition still clearly in mind, hog producers should act to prevent the same heat-related problems from recurring this summer, advises Dr. David Nichols, assistant professor of Animal Science at Kansas State University.

"Temperatures of 85 degrees and above place considerable stress on lactating sows," says the environmental physiologist. Pointing to a KSU study the conducted on drip-cooling lactating sows, Nichols notes heat-stressed sows are likely to consume less feed, lose more weight, and experience delayed return to estrus.

This study showed drip-cooled sows lost an average of only 8.4 lbs. during lactation, while their heat-stressed counterparts lost 38.5 lbs., Nichols recalls. "And while the drip-cooled group weaned an average litter weight of 123.9 lbs., the heat-stressed sows weaned litters weighing an average of 112.2 lbs."

Sows that experience significant shrinkage during lactation are less likely to return to estrus soon after weaning their young, Nichols says. "And missed or delayed estrus means downtime to the hog producer."

Affects Conception Rates

Excessive heat also adversely affects conception rates and the number of pigs born live, according to Oklahoma State University studies on heat-stressed sows. In one test, where 28 gilts were subjected to periods of 95° F, only nine of them settled, says OSU extension swine specialist Dr. Bill Luce.

"In the control group, where

temperatures were kept at a constant 74 degrees, all gilts settled," he adds.

In another OSU study, Luce points out gilts heat-stressed during the last three weeks of gestation farrowed an average of 5.2 dead pigs per litter, while the control group farrowed only .4 dead pigs per litter. Extreme heat most adversely affects gestating sows during the first and last three weeks of pregnancy, Luce adds. "During the first three weeks, it affects conception rates; during the last, it increases the number of stillborns," he says.

Boar fertility also suffers from heat stress, according to a related OSU experiment. Fertile boars subjected to 90-degree temperatures are likely to sire smaller litters, says Luce. In addition, the study showed that when a cool sow is mated with a heat-stressed boar, litter size averaged 8.5 pigs. However, when both the boar and sow are kept cool, average litter size was 9.55 pigs. When neither were kept cool, this average dropped to 7.8 pigs per litter.

Recommends Drip-Cooling

By slightly altering management practices in the area of temperature control, producers can minimize these summertime breeding problems, says Bob George, extension agriculture engineer at the University of Missouri.

"Drip-cooling, for instance, is probably one of the best ways to keep boars and lactating sows cool during heat spells," George notes. "The cool water gradually dripping on them evaporates, lowering body temperature and reducing heat stress."

Drip-cooling systems can range

from the elaborate to simple, George continues. "Producers can install temperature-triggered drip irrigation nozzles that drizzle tiny droplets," he says. "Another, less expensive method is hanging ice-filled burlap sacks above each sow's shoulder when the temperature climbs above 85 degrees," he suggests. "The ice gradually melts, dripping cool water onto the hogs."

A more time-worn method George advocates is snout cooling. "This is akin to an air conditioner," he says. "It cools the air, and then drops it at low velocity around the hogs' heads. They inhale it, and the cooled air reduces their body temperature."

Ventilation Important

Good ventilation is particularly important in keeping temperatures down in a hog facility, George continues. To ensure optimal ventilation, George advises producers to first determine air flow for the hottest summer day. This should be based on per head air movement, or air changes per minute, whichever number is higher, he says. "Then, producers should pick a combination of fans that will move that much air at 1/8th of an inch static pressure."

To accurately set the cubic feet per minute (CFM) air flow rate, producers must factor in total animal weight in a given room, as well as that room's volume, George says.

"In the farrowing house, for instance, I recommend 125 CFM for every hundredweight (cwt)," he says. "In the nursery and gestation units, this figure is 75 CFM per cwt. In the growing and finishing units, as well as the boar

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