



GLENN'S UDDERINGS

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Heat Detection Success

To get cows settled to A.I. (artificial insemination), you first have to catch cows in heat. Another way of stating this is the greater the success of catching cows in heat, the greater the conception rate and the lower the calving interval will be.

How successful are you in detecting heats? Your DHIA Herd Summary Reports (Penna. and Raleigh) can give you a clue. You'll find this figure in the reproductive section of Penna's Herd Summary Report II, and its broken down by lactation number. On the Raleigh reports, it is found in the upper right hand corner of the Herd Summary report in the Yearly Reproductive Summary section, a copy of which is shown below for discussion purposes.

(Table)

The % Heats OBS (observed) figure is an estimate at best, and even though it is an estimate, it is still a very useful tool to help evaluate reproductive management in your herd. The more accurate you and your DHIA technician are in reporting heat dates and breeding dates to the DHIA processing center, the more accurate these estimates will be.

A good goal to shoot for is ser-

vice about 70% of all possible breedings (heats). Normally, a cow would have a possible heat (breeding) every 21 days after her volunteer waiting period, whether she comes in heat or not, or whether you saw her in heat or not.

That is the maximum number of heats or breedings possible. The number of heats and breedings you report is compared to this maximum number possible to calculate the % observed. This is a simple, not entirely correct explanation of how the % observed is calculated. The actual calculation is a bit more complicated.

Let's look at the table. In the August test period the sample herd had a heat detection success of 46%. The average for the year was 53%. There is a lot of variation from month to month. In the last month (July), it was 61%, compared to 42%, a year earlier (for the month that was dropped).

This variation from month to month could be caused by a number of things, some of which are:

- Cows failing to show heat due to: hot climate conditions, negative energy balance (poor flesh), infections, poor footing etc.
- Failure to observe cows in heat due to: poor observation tech-

niques, weak signs, etc.

- Failure to report all heat detections and breedings to the DHIA processing center.

- Short-cycling cows with 80-hour shots, etc.

The next column shows the total number of breedings (services) reported to DHIA that month, and to the right of that. The % of these services that were successful, or confirmed pregnant. Since cows are not preg checked until about 40-45 days after breeding there is about a 2 month delay until this figure can be calculated. And, of course, the accuracy of this % successful figure depends upon reporting all preg checks immediately to DHIA.

Going back to the August test period for the example herd, 4% of the 28 services made that month were successful; that represents about 1 cow confirmed pregnant to those 28 services. You'll see that 1 confirmed pregnancy report 2 months later when the preg checks were performed.

The last two columns in this table are self explanatory. Basically they show the number of calvings for each test period and

YEARLY REPRODUCTIVE SUMMARY						
DATE OF TEST	% HEATS OBS	NUMBER SERVICES	% SUCCESSFUL	NUMBER CONFIRM PREG	NUMBER CALVING	TOTAL PREG COWS
MON-TH BRO-PEC	42	14	43	5	22	72
081489	46	28	4	3	18	74
091789	32	45	18	6	23	66
101389	65	58	40	1	20	55
111289	60	42	52	8	18	62
121089	76	25	40	26	10	65
011290	60	20	45	21	10	70
021190	50	23	65	8	6	73
031990	65	16	38	9	5	76
041390	35	16	56	12	7	60
051990	45	10	39	6	6	84
061490	42	12		8	9	82
071790	61	8		4	15	79
AVERAGES	53	25	38	9	12	72
TOTALS		303		112	147	

total number of pregnant cows in the herd for each test period.

As you can see, there are a lot of things that can affect the accuracy of these estimates, and as I mentioned earlier, if all the heats, all the breeding dates and all preg checks are reported accurately and promptly, these estimates can pro-

vide some valuable clues to help you monitor the success of your reproductive program and the impact of various forces (weather, etc.) upon the success of your program.

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WHAT DO THE RATINGS MEAN?

On the Raleigh 210 and 200 monthly reports all cows have a rating A, B, C, D, or E. This is designed to give dairymen a quick reference to manage individual cows in the herd.

These letter ratings categorize cows in five production groups based on their current lactations.

To determine the letter ratings, the current 305 day, 2X, ME records for all cows are adjusted to a 3.5% fat corrected milk (FCM) basis. The 3.5% FCM record for each cow is divided by the 3.5% FCM lactation average for the herd and the results are designated as follows:

- A=Top Cows more than 110 percent of herd average
- B=Above average 100 to 110 percent of herd average
- C=Below average 90 to 100 percent of herd average
- D=Marginal cows 80 to 90 percent of herd average
- E=Probable cull cows less than 80 percent

Dairymen should evaluate all "D" and "E" cows to determine what future they have in your herd. Look at past lactations as well as possible health problems that may be affecting the current lactation. "A" and "B" cows could be considered for building your herd around these quality animals.

The rating code is found beside the fat projection on the 210 report and to the right of the breeding date on the 200 report.



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