THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN "NOT SEEN BULLING" AND "ACYCLIC" COWS

By Martha Twist

Every farm that breeds cows will struggle with a difficult group that do not get in calf as easily as others. These are usually termed "not seen bullers", "oestrus not observed" or "no heat detected". But why do these cows not express heat as well as others? What do vets look for when scanning these animals and how to we decide on treatment and management plans?

First, we must understand the distinction between cows that are not seen bulling (in heat/oestrus) and those that are acyclic (not cycling).

Not Seen Bulling

When cows are not seen bulling, it often means they are cycling, but for some reason, their oestrus signs are not observed. Several factors can contribute to this issue:

1. Subtle Oestrus Signs: Some cows exhibit very mild or short-lived signs of oestrus, making it difficult to detect. This is more common in higher yield cows
2. Environmental Factors: High temperatures and stress, especially in the upcoming (hopefully!) summer weather can reduce the intensity of oestrus signs. Additionally, overcrowded or slippery underfoot conditions may reduce the cows' ability to display signs, especially more obvious ones such as mounting other cows.
3. Management Practices: Insufficient time spent observing cows, particularly during peak activity times (early morning and late evening), can result in missed oestrus detection. Without heat detection aids, the labour demands of observing heat are huge – at least two 30 minute blocks in 24 hours, but ideally more.

Hormonal intervention can be very useful in these cows to bring them into oestrus in a more predictable way. Synchronisation programmes with timed AI can also be of benefit here.

Acyclic Cows

Acyclic cows, on the other hand, are not experiencing oestrus cycles at all – they are anoestrus. This condition can be due to several underlying issues such as:

1. Nutritional Deficiencies: Inadequate transition cow management & BCS loss can lead to anoestrus. Ensuring cows are receiving a diet with adequate energy, protein, and minerals relevant to your farm is crucial.
2. Post-calving Anoestrus: After calving, cows will naturally go through a period of anoestrus, this is normal and often goes unnoticed as it falls well within the voluntary waiting period. However, this period can be prolonged due to conditions such as ketosis, retained foetal membranes, metritis or whites.

Health Problems: Conditions such as ovarian cysts, pyometra (uterine infection), or hormonal imbalances can disrupt the oestrous cycle.

EXCITING OPPORTUNITY FOR FARMERS TO JOIN A GENOMICS DAIRY PILOT STUDY

Have you been thinking about using genomic testing in your herd?

Neogen, a leading genomic company are offering 20 testing kits per farm at half price for herds who would like to participate in a FMLH pilot study.

The selected cows should be Holstein, Jersey, Brown Swiss, Ayrshire, and Guernsey breeds, in their 2nd lactation or older. Cows should be more than 87.5% pure bred.

The genomic information will be integrated into TotalVet, allowing us to better understand how genetics are being expressed on individual farms.

This is a great opportunity for anyone who has been thinking about dabbling in genomic testing to gain confidence in the value that it could bring to the farm.

Please chat to Helen if you are interested in participating.

Farmers Golf Day

We had a fabulous turn out for our first Farmer's Golf Day held at Folke Golf Centre. We will be arranging a charity one in the future. Keep following our social media for updates.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

5 JULY

GROWING DAIRY HEIFFERS AT GRASS

10.45am for prompt start at 11.00am to finish by 2pm. VENUE: North Wootton Farm, Sherborne, Dorset DT9 5JW Growing dairy heifers at grass. Sounds simple? Plenty of opportunities and pitfalls with changing seasons and tightening efficiencies.Join us with Piers Badnell, Pasture to Profit Consultant. Lunch included.

16 JULY

PRACTICAL CALVING COURSE

Tuesday 16th July 2024 10.30am– 3.30pm at Longmoor Farm, Gillingham, SP8 5QW
Join us to learn: The mechanics of a normal calving and knowing when to intervene and how to do so safely. Using a simulator, learn how to assess presentation and size of a calf. Learn how to correct simple malpresentations, when and how to use a calving jack safely. Best practice of care for the cow and newborn calf.
Cost £100 including VAT with 25% discount for dairy youngstock group members.

18 JULY

NATIONAL YOUNGSTOCK CONFERENCE

Please chat to Lucy, Becca or Marianna if you would like to attend.

30 JULY

LEVEL 2 CALF REARING COURSE

Tuesday 30th July 2024
10.30am – 3.30pm
The course will start at Park Corner Farm, Mere BA12 6AH and we will then move to Longmoor Farm which is nearby for the afternoon. This course is for those with experience of rearing calves who are looking to advance their knowledge to improve their rearing success.

16 - 18 SEPT

AI COURSE

Three days of theory, specimen and practical training. 10.00-2pm at the Sturminster Branch and Longmoor Farm.

Contact the farm office on 01258 472314 for more information on any of our courses.

Follow our social media to be up to date with our new build & Yoav's presentation skills

GILLINGHAM & SHAFTESBURY SHOW

Your BBQ tickets for the Gillingham & Shaftesbury Show are included with this month's bill. Please contact the office if you require more tickets.