

# Oestrus detection

Inseminating more cows at the  
right time



# What is oestrus?

- Cows are capable of breeding throughout the year but cannot get pregnant at all times
- They are receptive to the bull for short periods of time, which occur at roughly 21 day intervals
- At this time, cow behaviour changes:
  - restless
  - persistent licking/sniffing
  - chin pressing
  - bellowing
  - mounting other cows
- This behaviour is called 'oestrus' or 'heat'



# Oestrus: The facts



- Oestrus lasts for about 8-12 hours
- 70% of such behaviour occurs at night
- In UK systems cows may be mounted around 20 times while on heat, although 7-8 times is more likely

**“PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE”**

Plan for health with your vet - get a veterinary health plan

**NADIS**

*Animal Health Skills*

# Detecting oestrus: The key to effective reproduction



- Poor heat detection:
  - leads to missed and wrongly identified heats
  - huge impact on herd fertility

# The signs of oestrus

- Attempting to mount other cows
- Mounting head-to-head (rare but cows are usually in heat if they do this)
- Restless behaviour
- Bellowing when isolated
- Small increase in body temperature
- Poor milk let-down
- Clear mucus 'bulling string'

**COWS WILL STAND TO BE MOUNTED WHEN UNRESTRAINED**



# Strategy for heat detection



- Not just in collecting yards and while feeding
- Two hours after morning feed – when herd is quiet
- Again after afternoon milking/feeding
- Observe quietly
- Ensure you can easily identify cows
- Ensure all staff are trained in heat detection
- All staff must have a single person to report to



# Do we need to do more?



- Even with a well planned strategy - you may not get good submission rates
- Heat behaviour has reduced in duration and intensity
  - Increased yields
  - Non-seasonal breeding
  - Housing
  - Less time



# Heat detection aids

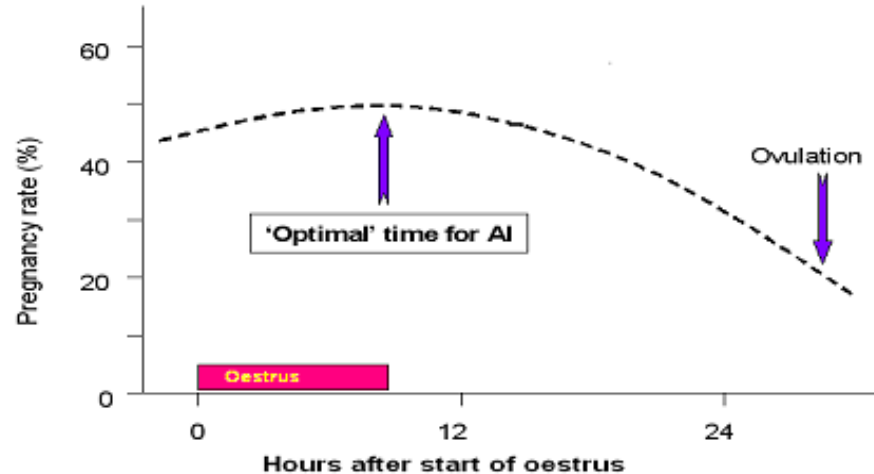
- Range from cheap to expensive
- Tail paint/chalk
- Heat mount detectors
- Teaser bulls
- Milk progesterone
- Activity monitors





# When to inseminate

- Follow the am-pm rule
- Inseminate too early rather than too late



# Summary

- Good heat detection is essential
- Poor heat detection costs money
- Need a planned strategy – key staff role
- Constantly assess your performance

Thank you for participating in  
this webinar