

Emergency Plan for Staff Heat Detection in the Dairy Herd

ALL STAFF ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR HEAT DETECTION AND RECORDING HEATS

Heat detection is a key factor for ensuring reproductive success and milk output in the dairy herd. This protocol aims to inform staff of the correct procedure for heat detection and correctly identifying cows ready for breeding.

Observe milking herd for heat detection _____ times a day for _____ minutes each time.

Timings of heat detection throughout the day: _____

Record all cows showing signs of heat. Where to record: _____

Record cow number, date, time seen on heat and report as soon as to the appropriate person for artificial insemination planning.

Recording of first heat after calving is important and this can take place from around 30 to 60 days post-calving but usually within 40 days. Repeat cycles occur on average every 21 days.

Observe cows for primary and secondary signs of heat.

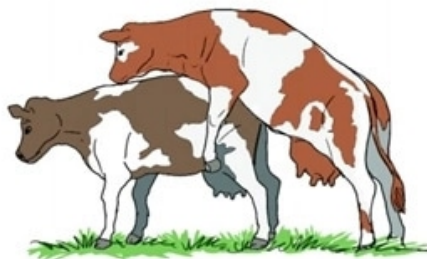
Primary sign of heat: The cow stands to be mounted (known as standing heat).

Secondary signs of heat (the cow is either coming into heat, in heat or coming off heat):

- Mounting other cows
- Clear mucus discharge
- Swelling and reddening of vulva
- Bellowing and restlessness – increase in activity
- Chin-resting
- Rubbed tailhead hair/dirty flanks
- Reduced milk yield/feed intake
- Bloody mucus discharge indicates cow was in heat (watch 18-19 days later)

Behavioural Indicators of Heat in Dairy Cows

Early heat	Standing heat	After heat
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased nervousness/ restlessness • Mounting other cows • Swollen vulva • Licking other cows • Sniffing other cows and being sniffed • Reduced feed intake 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standing to be mounted • Clear mucus discharge • Sharp decline in milk production • Tail bent away from the vulva • The animal may stop eating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dried mucus on the tail • Roughened tail head • The animal refuses to be mounted • Streaks of saliva or signs of leaking on her flanks
Early signs: Watch the cow closely	Best signs: Take the cow for service	Late signs: Keep record



(a) Standing to be mounted: The positive sign of heat is standing to be mounted. The cow in heat stands to be mounted and does not move away



(b) Licking: Both cows may be in heat

(c) Mounting head to head: The cow mounting is in heat



Fig. 19 (a) to (c): Behavioral signs of heat in cows