Ovsynch Can Help the Heat Detection Challenged

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To put it in politically correct terms, humans are “Heat Detection Challenged.” We know efficient and accurate heat detection are key parts of a successful A.I. program with dairy cows, but it is tough to continually do a good job of catching cattle in heat. Synchronizing ovulation so we can inseminate a cow at a predetermined time without watching her for heat is one solution, and can be accomplished with the Ovsynch protocol. The Ovsynch protocol is as follows: Day 1, inject cow with gonadotropin-releasing hormone (example GnRH products: Cystorelin, Factrel, Fertagyl); Day 8, inject cow with Prostaglandin $F_{2\alpha}$ (Example $PGF_{2\alpha}$ products: Lutalyse, Estumate); Day 10 (48 h after $PGF_{2\alpha}$), inject cow with GnRH; Day 11 (16 h after second GnRH) inseminate.

Research results indicate that conception rate with this method is comparable to the conception rate achieved with cows in the same herds which were bred after conventional heat detection. Dairy farmers who are using the Ovsynch protocol say the main advantage is they can make sure cows are inseminated soon after the cow enters the breeding herd. Ovsynch gives the dairy farmer more control over days to first service and results in getting some cows pregnant soon after they enter the breeding herd.

Most cows (70% or more) do not show standing heat during the Ovsynch protocol. If a cow does show standing heat, the injection protocol should be stopped and the cow inseminated at the appropriate time relative to standing heat.

The Ovsynch protocol works well enough to deserve a try in excellently managed herds where inefficient heat detection appears to be the weakest link in reproductive management. Ovsynch does not work with heifers because the conception rate is not acceptable.

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