

## JUNE 2006 NEWS

**WEATHER ALERT!** Summer has taken off with a bang. We have two issues of importance to deal with.

Heat stress is a severe stressor for dairy cattle, both lactating and dry! Watch the impact of heat on your cows currently milking. If you're seeing milk drops or reductions in dry matter intake, you have a problem to deal with. With milk prices having dropped again, no one can afford suffering from the effects of hot weather.

Coliform mastitis loves hot weather. Hot and humid weather favors bacterial growth in cow environments. Watch out for this killer form of mastitis in both lactating and dry cows. Immediate action is generally needed to not only preserve productivity, but sometimes the life of the cow. If you use J5® vaccine, are you current?, or is a booster indicated considering the sudden change in weather. If you don't use J5®, maybe you need to learn about it.

**BREEDING ISSUES CONTINUED:** Recently we've discussed different issues related to breeding cows and keeping them pregnant (see newsletter archives at [Grasslandvet.com](http://Grasslandvet.com)). Further research has found yet another way to help problem cows remain pregnant if in fact they conceived at breeding.

It has been shown that high producing dairy cows have lower levels of the hormone responsible for maintaining pregnancy (progesterone). I'll explain. Cow ovaries produce 'eggs'. The egg is released at ovulation related to a heat period. Progesterone is then produced by a corpus luteum (CL) formed on the cow's ovary as a result of ovulation. If a cow is pregnant from insemination at that heat period this CL structure stays on the ovary through pregnancy producing progesterone to support that calf. A problem arises with high producing cows. These cows have a greater rate of blood circulation through the udder to make milk. As a result, their blood also circulates through the liver more frequently, causing a higher rate of progesterone metabolism and removal. Lower levels of circulating progesterone increase the likelihood of loss of pregnancy.

It has been proven that another injection of GNRH hormone after breeding will increase the rate of pregnancy in high producing cows. When a cow is bred, the injection should occur 5-7 days later. This injection leads to another ovulation on the ovary, causing the formation of an additional CL, and the production of more progesterone. If a conceived fetus is present, it is more likely to be maintained by the cow.

Certainly there are many reasons that cows might not conceive or remain pregnant. This is merely one more tool that can be used selectively to increase the odds of getting a problem cow to remain pregnant.

**PINKEYE REMINDER:** One reminder also for herds who experience problems with pinkeye in heifers or cows. Vaccines are available to prevent or reduce the incidence of this disease in your cattle. This bacterial infection is contagious, spread between cattle either by flying insects, or by direct contact between animals. It is not the same pinkeye which affects humans. Pinkeye is a problem for some herds year 'round. Mostly pinkeye is a warm weather problem, occurring well into September, and sometimes October. We recommend a vaccine called Pinkeye Shield XT4®. We have continued to enjoy good protection throughout our practice with this brand of vaccine.