LINWOOD
VETERINARY SERVICES

**DR. MARTIN MISENER DR. MURRAY RUNSTEDLER DR. PAUL SOSTAR**
**DR. ANDREW MACLEOD DR. JODI KENDREW DR. JOHN TOKARZ**
**DR. CHRIS DITTENHOFFER DR. ROXANE PARDIAC**
**DR. CHRISTINA MOHOS**

**3860 Manser Road, Linwood, Ontario N0B 2A0 (519) 698-2610**
**1-800-663-2941 Fax (519) 698-2081**
linwoodvet@linwoodvet.ca

# APRIL 2008 NEWSLETTER

## DAIRY

During our recent client day in early February, Dr. Randy Graham gave an interesting presentation regarding the economics of reproduction and what we can gain in our dairy operations if we focus on getting cows pregnant. Many of you were in attendance, but for those of you who weren't here is a review:

- As a goal, we should aim to have 50% of cows pregnant within 3 cycles of the voluntary waiting period and 75% of cows pregnant by 6 cycles. Less than 20% of cows should still be open by 10 cycles after the voluntary waiting period.
- Pregnancy rate (measured on a 21-day cycle) is the best metric for monitoring reproductive performance as it provides the most immediate feedback and is least susceptible to external influences which may skew the data. Pregnancy rate is generated in DairyComp305 and is therefore available from DHI or from your herd veterinarian.
- Only 35% of eligible cows are bred in any heat cycle. Since cows that are not bred cannot become pregnant there is lots of opportunity to achieve more pregnant cows within our herds by breeding more cows. Programs like OvSynch and other synchronized breeding programs can help us achieve these goals.
- Average pregnancy rate in Ontario is just over 12%. Farmers should strive to achieve approximately 20% to ensure a sufficient supply of fresh heifers and milk production year-round.
- Methods to increase AI submission rates include better heat detection, timed AI for first service, increased frequency of "open" cow checks and resynchronization of open cows.
- On average, a pregnant cow is worth $300-400 more than a similar open cow. This change in value is because of the increased likelihood of keeping pregnant cows and the production that undoubtedly follows.
- After controlling time to first insemination, the next hurdle may be controlling time to re-insemination of open cows. If cows are synchronized for first AI, cows that are non-pregnant *should* at least be synchronized. When using an OvSynch program, 88% of open cows are usually re-bred following open check.
- According to a recent field trial designed to increased pregnancy rates, improved PR was directly related to increased submission (insemination) rate and more regular open cow diagnosis (in the form of bi-weekly herd checks).

## EQUINE

### Equine Choke

The term choke in equine medicine does not refer to a blocked airway but rather a blockage of the esophagus. The esophagus is approximately 4 feet in length and it connects the throat to the stomach. It is a very muscular structure and these muscular contractions allow the feedstuff to travel into the stomach. A blockage generally occurs when a foreign body is swallowed or if a wad of food is not chewed properly and an inadequate amount of saliva is present.

The majority of equine chokes are mild, unnoticed and are resolved spontaneously once enough saliva has travelled down into the esophagus. However, there are some incidences that require medical intervention to help clear the blockage or remove the foreign body. Equine choke is rarely a life threatening issue but if the blockage is significantly large, it can cause long term damage to the esophageal tissues leading to chronic issues.

Even though the majority of equine chokes do resolve on their own without complications, there are certain factors that help indicate if this case requires emergency care. If the horse is stressed and appears to be agitated, or if there is saliva or feedstuff coming out of one or both nostrils, emergency veterinary assistance is required and you should contact your veterinarian immediately. While awaiting the veterinarian's arrival, please remove all feed and water from the horse's stall and try to keep them as calm as possible.

Certain types of feed are known to cause an increase chance of your horse developing choke. Dried, pelleted beet pulp is more likely to cause choke because once the dried beet pulp comes into contact with saliva, it can expand to 4 times its original size. In order to avoid a case of choke, the pelleted beet pulp should be soaked and allowed to expand prior to being fed. Pellet size has also been showed to potentially cause an episode of choke. Smaller pellets are often inadequately chewed and not enough saliva gets added to the feedstuff making it more difficult to swallow. If your horse tends to bolt his small pellets, you may want to attempt to slow him down by adding large rocks to his feed tub thereby making him push them around in order to attain his feed.

Prevention is always the best medicine. Avoid feeding dried pelleted beet pulp and ensure your horse does not rapidly consume his small pelleted feed. If carrots and apples are fed, make sure to offer them in small bit size pieces. If you are at all concerned that your horse is suffering from a case of equine choke and appears to be agitated or saliva/feedstuff is present in his nostrils, please contact your veterinarian immediately.