

Top ten priorities for a successful heat detection program

1. SOPs: Establish standard operating procedures (SOPs) for heat detection that include when, where, signs of estrus observed and who to notify.
2. Utilize records: All heat periods detected should be recorded.
3. Group interaction: Watch for sexually active groups of cows.
4. Minimize sore feet: A cow with sore feet usually does not mount or permit other cows to mount her.
5. 3-a-day: Three daily observation periods is a minimum, and four is even better, as an average heat period lasts for only 8 hours.
6. Timing is everything: Do not observe during feeding or milking times.
7. Location, Location, Location: Visual observations should be where cows have a good footing surface with few obstacles to hinder interaction.
8. Use aids wisely: Heat detection aids should be used to supplement, not replace, visual detection.
9. Induced ovulation programs: Hormonal treatments increase the probability of detecting estrus, and allow AI without estrus detection.
10. Don't take shortcuts!