

is quite common (ie. Employees just not prepared or overloaded with other tasks and are not able to detect heats correctly). It is also common to find no standard operating procedures in place for a herd's reproduction program.

2) BACK DOOR APPROACH

We've seen some dairy farms inconsistently performing neither heat detection and timed A.I. They do both approaches, but not at the same time. In Brazil, we like to say that 'one dog with two owners may easily die of starvation sometimes'. In other words, it takes more organization to work with this type of management, and a

strong standard operating procedure must be in place for this type of reproduction program to work properly.

3) GREATER THAN 80% TIMED A.I.

Although timed A.I. is a great tool and I actually spent most of my education trying to improve timed A.I. results in dairy cattle, it is frustrating to see that many dairy farms are not using this technology in the correct way.

For instance, if a dairy does not have great conception results and if the average interval between the first 3 postpartum breedings is greater than 40-45 DIM, this farm better

start working with a shorter VWP. And they should combine with it accurate heat detection between re-synchronization protocols in order to improve pregnancy rates. Otherwise, this farm will get into spending tons of money in hormones for timed A.I. and will be struggling with modest pregnancy rate results of only 14 to 16%.

The following is a simple decision tree to assist producers in deciding the best VWP for their farm business. This diagram is far from being perfect, but is a good start to making choices for an individual herd's VWP. Please let us know if we can assist you in deciding the right VWP for your dairy.

Figure 1. This simple decision tree is a good start to assisting with VWP decisions. The decision tree is based on a weighted average between conception rate and service rate performances in order to reach average days open of 110-120 days.

