

fair number of calves that probably weigh below 400 pounds that are between 8 months and 12 months that we're starting to spay. I started doing it, not because I wanted to, but because of a brucellosis project that's going on at A&M and they weren't willing to wait until they're a year old. They said you spay them or forget it. And I thought well under those circumstances I'll give it a try and it's worked better than I thought. If you have a tendency to work out at Nautilus frequently you have a good sized forearm, you're good at arm wrestling, you

have definite forearm strength, I would say there are limitations with the instrument. I wouldn't recommend anybody that has a powerful forearm and hand to even start, especially in smaller heifers. When heifers weigh 900 to 1000 lbs. it's more difficult to get by with the KR technique. So there is some physical limitation with the KR technique. I don't consider myself having small hands. I don't think there's a great limitation but for some people there definitely is.

Abstracts

Continuing presence of rinderpest virus as a threat in East Africa, 1983–1985

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The re-emergence of rinderpest virus in East Africa in 1979 caused widespread outbreaks of disease and subclinical infection throughout the region until mid-1983. Subsequent massive emergency vaccination campaigns have been successful in eliminating clinical rinderpest from Tanzania and preventing its spread southwards. Unfortunately the virus is still endemic in north-eastern Uganda and has recently caused epidemic outbreaks with high mortality in cattle in that country. In Kenya, buffaloes (*Syncerus caffer*) in and around the Masai Mara game reserve have developed antibodies to rinderpest virus as recently as late 1984. Although there have been no outbreaks of clinical disease in Tanzania or Kenya from April 1983 to the end of 1985 this serological evidence plus the increasing incidence of clinical outbreaks in Uganda indicate that rinderpest virus still threatens East Africa. The substantial aid which has been provided to the region for rinderpest control must be maintained.

Testing for antibiotic residues in milk

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Milk from dairy farms in England and Wales has been tested regularly for antibiotic residues since 1965. The sensitivity of the test organism was 0.02 iu/ml penicillin or equivalent until the change to 0.01 iu/ml in January 1986. In 1984–85, 99.6 per cent of the 2,000,000 milk samples tested passed the test and there was an average of 695 failures per month. From 7500 on-farm investigations over the two years 1983–85 the most frequent reasons suggested by farmers for their test failures were not withholding milk for the full withdrawal period (19.3 to 16.5 per cent) and accidental transfer of milk (16.3 to 16.7 per cent). Lactating and dry cow intramammary antibiotic preparations were held responsible for rather over 50 per cent and 25 per cent respectively of the failures in both years.

Oestrus prediction in dairy cows using an ELISA progesterone test

R. G. Eddy, P. J. Clark

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The commercially available test kit for assaying milk progesterone was used in the practice laboratory on samples taken daily from cows 17 to 24 days after service. Improved oestrus detection rates and accuracy were achieved by predicting the onset of oestrus. Similar results were obtained by sampling on days 18, 20, 22 and 24 or on days 19, 21 and 23 after service. Calving to conception intervals improved from 115 to 84 days in one herd and from 85 to 74 days in another and the potential economic benefits in these two herds outweighed the costs by 7.4:1 and 3.4:1, respectively.

An assessment of the economic benefits of a mastitis control scheme

R. W. Blowey

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Over a six-year period from 1979 to 1985 the incidence of mastitis among dairy herds being recorded in a veterinary practice in Gloucestershire decreased from 26.5 per cent to 19.6 per cent of cows affected each year and from 51.0 to 31.7 cases per 100 cows per year. Over the same period the rolling mean herd milk cell count fell from 346,000/ml to 243,000/ml and the usage of intramammary antibiotic tubes fell from 2.6 to 2.1 per lactating cow per year. The proportion of cases needing repeat treatments in a 12-month period also fell from 25 per cent to 10.6 per cent. Possible causes for the decrease in the incidence of mastitis are given. The cost of an average case of mastitis was estimated to be £40, and on this basis the farms involved reduced their losses from mastitis by £772 per 100 cows per year, a more than 12-fold return on their investment in veterinary services.