

do it with a scalpel blade because you might cut something else or you might cut yourself or you might cut the calf. One solution to this problem was shown to me in France about a year ago. This is a very different practice situation...more like New Zealand dairies with a lot of pasture.

They do a lot of caesareans there because their calves are worth about \$300, or they were then at that exchange rate, when they hit the ground. The value of the calf is high because they have an active veal industry. This doctor showed me this practice tip that I am to share with you.

You may be wondering how you use a letter opener to get out of this problem. It's a plastic letter opener which is made in Germany. It has a very sharp metal razor-type blade embedded in it. The way you use it is, you probe the point through the uterus and then you just zip the incision open. The advantages that I have already alluded to are that you have a shielded blade. It is safe for the cow, it is safer for the surgeon and for the calf. Some people I've spoken to use scissors for this purpose. I've used scissors myself. But my problem is sometimes I want to cut toward me, which is

difficult and I just find them awkward to handle inside the uterus. With this opener you can pretty much put the incision wherever you want it and just zip it open in no time at all. There is much less fumbling around. You can make it as long as you want so you don't have problems with tearing which is another problem I run into. I'd get the incision to a certain point and chicken out and then I'd have a tear. In this case you can really make the incision as long as you like.

In thinking about what I'm doing, if the fetal membranes or the sac hasn't broken, you'd probably be better off to drain that vaginally before you make the incision. So the only complication is that this device is not autoclavable as far as I know. I haven't tried but I think it would melt. The only problem we've ever had is one of my associates broke the point off and had to retrieve it. It's not indestructable, but it works.

The problem that I faced was I could not find any of these in this country so I ordered some from France. I was unable to find any device like this that was sold by anyone in the stationery business.

## Use of Plastic Buttons for Repair of Vaginal Prolapse in the Cow

**Joe Dixon, D.V.M.**  
*Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70803*

There have been quite a number of different methods for repairing vaginal prolapse in the cow and a lot of the difficulties are in that cow that is going to calve. I was taught in school by Dr. Lewis Moe who was an instructor at that time to use overcoat buttons. But overcoat buttons are difficult to find any more, and since plastic came out I have been cutting out plastic serum bottles or plastic buttons. I have been using an old spay needle. It has Sharp & Smith stamped on it. There is one button that is available commercially. It is a Johnson button that has a pin to insert and stick out through the pelvis to anchor the vagina in place. But plastic is readily available and I just cut them in different sizes, whatever the serum bottle or plastic button, thread this on to the needle. After cleaning the vagina, put it back and take your fist and go in against the cervix and push it in as far as you can and then feel on the outside where you are going...with your finger...and then push the needle through and pull the thread out and the needle. Place the small button, then on top of it, and then pull it on and tie it. To do it on both sides will anchor the vagina back in place and the cow quits straining. If the cow hasn't calved she will be able to go ahead and have the calf. The calf will slide right over these buttons and you don't have to worry. Whereas if

you put a bootlace in there, somebody has to take that out. It has always worked very well for me and is very economical. Everybody has a plastic button; there is no problem to find material for it. No. 8 vetafil works very well. Before vetafil came along we used umbilical tape. It does all right. I've looked back in some areas to try and find if the plastic button was mentioned in the obstetrical book that we used in school and couldn't find it there. In 1967 there were 2 or 3 articles in a journal and one of them was on the use of gauze in the same manner and there was another one I believe that had some buttons of some type. This was in the *AVMA Journal* in the year 1967. It is simple and easy to do. About the only precaution that needs to be taken is you locate the artery along the side of the wall of the vagina. You can't see it. It is possible to put it on one side and you go back the other side without going back in to the rectum to check things, you can go through the rectum. I didn't think that was a problem, but I did that a couple of months ago. It caused no problem to the cow but I did it twice on a Holstein. I have done it mostly in Brahman-cross cattle where it has happened most. The Polled Hereford used to be the cow that was most frequently seen with the prolapsed vagina.