

Issue 2: Know What Heat Detection Tools Are Available To You

Welcome to the second issue of the ESTROTECT™ Breeding Advocate series. This issue's topic focuses on common heat detection tools available to you.

Tail Paint or Tail Chalk

Tail paint or tail chalk are repeat use tools that help identify when a cow has been mounted. Producers apply a thick stripe of tail paint or chalk to the cow's tail head. After a cow has been mounted, the hair on the tail head will noticeably stand up with some color rubbed off.

While these tools are inexpensive and easy to apply, they do not show evidence of multiple mountings and are more prone to false positive. They must be re-applied frequently, especially in wet weather conditions.

Capsule Heat Detectors

Capsule heat detectors are one-time use heat detection patches applied to the cow's tail head. Each patch includes a small container of colored fluid that breaks open from mounting impact.

Capsule heat detectors have been used successfully on many farms and ranches, but they do not show evidence of multiple mountings. Even after the capsule heat detector has been activated, you may need to monitor for additional signs of standing heat.

Rub-Off Heat Detectors

Rub-off or friction heat detectors are self-adhesive patches that are also applied to the cow's tail head. As more mountings occur, more coloring on the heat detector will be exposed, signaling that the cow is likely in standing heat. Rub-off heat detectors have been used on countless farms worldwide and are arguably the most successful heat detection products available.

However, a number of rub-off heat detection products feature varying levels of quality. There is only one rub-off heat detection product that has received endorsements from university research to be as good as a bull* in

determining cows in standing heat. Be sure to select the product that can prove its effectiveness with concrete third party data and longevity in the marketplace.

Activity Monitors

Activity monitors are becoming more common in heat detection, especially for synchronization programs. Pedometer or accelerometers are applied to the leg or around the neck of the cow to track movement. Activity is typically monitored using a computer, tablet or other record keeping system.

However, if a cow is exhibiting signs of increased movement on their activity monitor, it is important to not jump to conclusions. Observe the cow before making a decision on its heat status.

Wireless Heat Detection Systems

Wireless heat detection systems (wireless systems) are 24-hour mount detection systems – they do not track movement or metabolic activity. A battery-operated wireless transmitter applied to the cow's tail head sends data streams with the actual time and duration of every mounting event as it happens. These data streams are collected and analyzed in a computer system that is programmed to tell producers when cows are ready to be bred.

If you are considering a wireless system, choose a company that will take the time to customize a system for your specific farm. Be sure the company places a priority on customer service and is prompt to answer questions.

Which Heat Detection Product is Right For You?

We recommend always selecting a proven product that is supported by university or independent third party research. Remember – not all heat detection products are created equally, even though they may look alike.

For more information on ESTROTECT™ Heat Detectors and other Innovative Herd Management Tools, visit www.ESTROTECT.com.