

Issue 1: Know the Visual Signs of Standing Heat

Welcome to the first issue of the ESTROTECT™ Breeding Advocate series. This issue's topic focuses on detecting the visual signs of standing heat.

Standing heat is the 6-8 hour time frame when a cow is entering its maximum opportunity for pregnancy. Since the average heat cycle for cows is between 18-24 days, each missed standing heat can be a costly mistake.

Common visual signs of standing heat to look for include:

Mounting Activity

Increased mounting activity is a clear visual sign of standing heat. Cows in standing heat may be mounted anywhere from 15-50 times during this time period. When observing your herd, be on the lookout for mounts that last between 3-5 seconds. This indicates a high likelihood that the cow is in standing heat. If a cow is mounted and quickly scurries away, she should be monitored, but is not likely to be in standing heat.

There are many different mount detection aids available to help producers monitor mounting activity. However, keep in mind that not all mount detection aids are created equally. It is important to make sure the product you choose has been proven to be effective by university or independent third party research and best supports your heat detection protocols.

Increased Restlessness, Movement or Bellowing

Cows in standing heat tend to be more active. You may start to see them become more aggressive in the herd, frequently sniffing, rubbing or resting their head on the backsides of other cows. They may also become more skittish or sensitive to their surroundings, oftentimes bellowing more than usual.

Not all cows will express these behaviors when in standing heat, but they are quite common and should be monitored.

Swelling of the Vulva

Swelling of the vulva – along with the presence of a mucus discharge produced by the cervix – are also good indicators of standing heat. However, these symptoms may persist after the cow has finished its estrus cycle.

Muddy Flanks

Mud showing around the sides of flanks may suggest that a cow has been mounted. Keep in mind this sign may not be as accurate as others, especially in wet weather conditions.

Take Advantage of Proven Heat Detection Aids

Detecting your cows in standing heat takes practice and patience. It is important to keep in mind that not all cows display the same visual signs.

However, frequent mounting activity is widely considered the primary sign for standing heat. We recommend using tried and true heat detection aids that identify evidence of multiple mountings to help you throughout the breeding process.

Stay tuned for the next issue of the Breeding Advocate where we will discuss the many different types of heat detection aids that are available to you.

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