

SIGNS OF HEAT IN DAIRY CATTLE

<p>MOUNTING <i>Primary sign**</i></p>	<p>The primary sign of estrus is a cow standing to be mounted by another cow(s). Standing heat is the most sexually intensive period of the estrous cycle and is applicable only in free stall or pasture.</p>	
<p>RUBBED MARKS</p>	<p>When cows mount each other excessively throughout the day they can leave small rubbing marks on each other's hind quarters. Usually just in front of the pin bones or below the hook bones.</p> <p>The legs and flanks may be smeared with mud or manure. Size, appearance, and freshness of these marks along with the fact that few other events can cause similar signs; these rubbed marks are one of the most reliable secondary indicators of estrus.</p>	
<p>MUCUS DISCHARGE</p>	<p>Long viscous, sticky, clear elastic strands of mucus generally hang from the vulva. Sometimes, however, the mucus does not appear externally until the cow is palpated during insemination and the mucus is expelled. Mucus also may be smeared on the tail, thighs, flanks, or perineal region.</p> <p>Discharged mucus dries quickly so finding dried mucus on the tail, flanks, or legs is just as good a secondary sign as seeing a string of clear viscous mucus coming from the vulva.</p>	
<p>SWOLLEN VULVA</p>	<p>The vulva increases in size and takes on a pinkish swollen appearance. Upon opening the labia an intense dark pink to red and highly moistened vagina is present if the cow is in estrus. In contrast, the vagina will appear dry and pale to white in color when the cow is not in estrus</p>	
<p>CHIN RESTING AND BACK RUBBING</p>	<p>Chin resting is thought to be testing by herd mates to determine if an individual is receptive to being mounted. This testing is performed by first resting a chin on the back of the cow. Considerable salivating and licking usually takes place during this testing process so you should inspect the loin and tail head area for saliva.</p>	
<p>BELLOWING, RESTLESSNESS AND TRAILING</p>	<p>Cows in heat are more restless and alert to their surroundings. When allowed to interact with other cattle, cows coming into heat "proestrus" and cows in heat persistently trail behind to try to mount other cows. Research shows that cows in heat spend less time resting than non-estrous herd mates. Prior to and during heat, they remain standing and alert while their herd mates are lying down and resting. This is more noticeable for stanchioned cows. Stall floors will look dirty and stamped on indicating restlessness. Cattle may bellow more frequently during estrus. Although these are not definitive signs of heat, cows exhibiting such behavior should be watched closely for standing behavior.</p>	
<p>No milk let down</p>	<p>Even though the udder is full, the cow may not let down her milk.</p>	
<p>GROUPING</p>	<p>Cows in heat tend to look for willing partners to get involved in estrus-related activities. These sexually active groups are a clear indication that at least one cow inside one of these groups is in estrus. Applies to free stall and pasture.</p>	
<p>BLOODY DISCHARGE <i>**After Heat occurs</i></p>	<p>A streak of blood in the mucus usually means that that cow had a high peak of estrogen one to three days ago, therefore indicating that the heat was missed. It is therefore recommended to record that heat and date it two days ago. This only indicates that she has been in heat. It has no relationship with timing of ovulation or whether she conceived.</p>	