President’s Message

It is with a great sense of appreciation that I assume the role of President of the AETA.

I would like to thank everyone who joined us in Tampa. We were fortunate that the weather cooperated, and I hope your experience was enjoyable. Please bear with me; my thank-you list is very long. First of all, I would like to thank members of CETA, Marty Darrow, Ron Herron, and Karen McDermott. We look forward to meeting with you again in Minneapolis. I offer a special thank you to the staff of FASS, Jennifer Gavel, Keely Roy, and Chuck Sapp. Our association with you continues to strengthen, and I anticipate another productive year.

This meeting would have been very difficult without the support of the many sponsors and exhibitors. Please join me in thanking them by patronizing their businesses. I had a very rewarding experience corresponding with all of our speakers and extend a sincere thank you to them. I hope everyone found something to take home.

Finally, a heartfelt thank you to Judy and Jim Griffin for all of their help, advice, and direction. I value your friendship, and your hospitality was overwhelming.

I am happy to report that Tampa 2004 will be recorded as another successful meeting. Final registration counts totaled 273 delegates; 222 from AETA and 51 from CETA/ACTE. New at this year’s convention was the Past Presidents’ breakfast. This well-attended event brought together the present Board of Directors with a large number of Past Presidents. It was a very enjoyable time as we recounted the formation and evolution of the AETA and some of its policies. We discussed many of the past Board decisions and important events that have shaped the AETA. The Board was very receptive to the concerns and suggestions of several of the Past Presidents. The AETA thanks Randall Hinshaw and Darrel DeGroft for sponsoring the breakfast. I am confident that this will become an annual event.

We tried to make the practitioners’ forum more audience-interactive this year. I hope everyone found this format informative and maybe a little entertaining. The wet labs continue to be well attended. ET 101 will be returning in Minneapolis.

One highlight from the Board of Directors’ meeting involved the election process of officers of the AETA. The Board discussed that the historical progression of an elected officer from Secretary/Treasurer to Vice President/Program Chair to President may not be in the best interest of the AETA and/or the officer. This tradition has been outside the spirit of the AETA bylaws. It was decided that the outgoing Board will elect the next year’s officers individually. Hopefully, this will ensure the proper person in each office.

Resolution of the GMO situation continues to be very important to all of us. Many of you have voiced concerns that it is time to halt this expensive procedure. This committee has worked very diligently and, at this time, would like to continue the process of trying to discover possible assets. We will keep you informed.

(continued on page 2)
(continued from page 1)

The Cooperator Committee and the association with USLGE and trips to China have been an area of misunderstanding for most of us. I hope the presentation by Scott Armbrust and Bob Rowe helped answer some of your questions.

The tax-exempt status of the AETA was reinstated on Oct. 29, 2004. According to the IRS, the AETA is exempt from Federal income tax under section 501 (c) (5) of the Internal Revenue Code. In light of all of our other concerns, this is certainly good news.

A few weeks ago, after describing my trip to Tampa to a client, he asked me “what is the purpose of the AETA?” After fumbling around for a minute and offering a variety of answers, I decided to reread the AETA mission statement. I encourage you to read the statement, which can be found on our website www.aeta.org and get involved in a committee, if you are so inclined. A list of committee chairs is included. Through the hard work of many of you, the AETA has weathered quite a storm.

I wish all of you a happy holiday season.

Notice to Readers

Articles published in A Closer Look are not peer-reviewed or refereed. All statements, opinions, and conclusions contained in the articles in A Closer Look are those of the author(s) and are not necessarily those of the American Embryo Transfer Association unless specifically approved by the AETA Board of Directors.

Lab Embryo Transfer School

Clemson University’s Animal & Veterinary Sciences Department is proud to announce the first annual Lab Embryo Transfer School (CLETS). This seminar series, training session, and hands-on workshop will be held on the campus of Clemson University in South Carolina and will focus on the laboratory portion of bovine embryo transfer. Daily seminars and laboratory training sessions will be provided in the following key areas:

- Recovering embryos from filters
- Embryo transfer and freezing
- Assisting ET practitioner
- Embryo thawing
- Maintaining embryo inventory
- Lab design and maintenance
- Donor management
- ET practitioner schedules
- ET equipment sterilization

This is an ideal opportunity for new ET practitioners or employees or is a good refresher training for practicing veterinarians or staff.

Course schedule = Jan. 17–21, 2005
Cost = $750/student
Deadline for registration = December 17

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AVS Dept.
Clemson University
864-656-3138
jgibbons@clemson.edu

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Thank you to all sponsors and exhibitors
Acceptance Letter

This is the acceptance speech I would have given after receiving the President’s Award at the Tampa Convention. I couldn’t speak; I was barely able to say “Thank you.” I was very surprised and truly overwhelmed. I am most honored to have received this award.

I have gotten so much from my serving on the AETA Board, and I want to share some of that experience with you. It certainly wasn’t what I expected! I have made some great friends, and I found that I have a twin in Dan Hornickle. But the real reward for me and for those who have served on the Board for the last couple of years is knowing that through all of the strife and anxiety, we are leaving the AETA a much better organization. Stem to stern, we have examined every detail of the AETA’s existence. Many past oversights have been addressed. We are now officially an IRS-approved non-profit organization, we have established appropriate financial oversight through the Audit Committee, and we’re witnessing the birth of a great alliance with our CETA friends.

My hope is that these positive steps will continue with those that follow on future Boards. In my opinion, that is best secured with active membership. The AETA needs everyone to participate. Please join in! I promise you that you’ll get back at least triple what you put in. Thanks.

Again, I am grateful this tremendous accolade. Thank you very much, Larry.

Sincerely,
Richard Whitaker, DVM
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Pregnancy Diagnosis in Dairy Cows by Palpation or Ultrasound: a Survey of US Veterinarians

Anir Rosenbaum, DVM; L. D. Warnick, PhD, DVM
Ambulatory and Production Medicine Clinic, College of Veterinary Medicine, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY

Introduction
Our objective was to study palpation and ultrasound pregnancy-diagnostic practices used for dairy cows by US veterinarians.

Material and Methods
A questionnaire was mailed to 1171 AABP members in the fall 2003 followed by a reminder postcard two weeks later.

Results
Five hundred eighty-eight (50%) veterinarians responded. The following results are based on answers from 522 individuals who were currently in dairy practice and regularly checked dairy cows for pregnancy.

Four hundred one (77%) veterinarians diagnosed pregnancy in dairy cows by rectal palpation only, while 116 (22%) also used ultrasound. Five (1%) used only ultrasound for pregnancy diagnosis.

Media lower cut-off for days since breeding used to check cows was 34 days for palpation and 27 days for ultrasound. When asked the earliest gestation length they were confident diagnosing cows as pregnant, the median response was 32 days for palpation and 27 days for ultrasound. Median for earliest days since breeding they were comfortable administering prostaglandin to cows diagnosed open (non-pregnant) was 35 days for palpation and 28 days for ultrasound.

Not including call fees, median charge per cow was $3 (USD) for palpation and $4.75 for ultrasound. For veterinarians charging by the hour, median cost per cow was estimated based on number of cows checked per hour and ranged from $1.50 to $3 for palpation and $2.40 to $4.50 for ultrasound.

Significance
The study provides an overview of pregnancy diagnostic procedures for US dairy cows and can be used as the basis for future economic studies.
Effect of Milk Urea Nitrogen and Nutrition on Reproductive Performance in Commercial Dairy Herds in Prince Edward Island, Canada

P. Arunvipas¹; J. A. VanLeeuwen¹; I. R. Dohoo¹; G. P. Keefe¹; S. A. Burton²; K. D. Lissemore³; E. R. Leger⁴
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³Department of Population, Medicine, Ontario Veterinary College, Guelph, ONT, Canada N1G 2W1
⁴Canadian Food Inspection Agency, PO Box 1065, Moncton, NB, Canada, E1C 8P2

Introduction
The objective of this study was to investigate the impact of nutritional and management factors and milk urea nitrogen levels on reproductive performance in a large number of commercial dairy herds in Prince Edward Island (PEI), Canada.

Materials and Methods
A total of 83 dairy herds in the province of PEI participated in the study. The farms were visited twice and contacted once by telephone between October 1999 and January 2001. At each farm visit, stored feeds were sampled, and were subsequently submitted to the provincial feed testing laboratory to determine their nutritional value. For each herd at each of the three contact times, a detailed questionnaire relating to nutrition and management was completed and a formal ration evaluation was conducted using SPARTAN for three stages of lactation (early, mid and late). All farms were on a monthly milk testing program. Therefore, breeding data from all cows from these farms were gathered electronically from a central database. All first services occurring from 60 days before to 80 days after each nutritional evaluation were used in these analyses. The occurrence and timing of subsequent breedings and calvings were used to determine first service breeding success (FSBS). Milk components and 24 hour milk production data for herd test closest to the first service date were also gathered from the central database. From our previous work on 186 dairy herds without nutritional data, the log odds of FSBS was decreased after MUN exceeded 15.5 mg/dl. Therefore, MUN values were classified into 2 groups, low (<15.5 mg/dl) and high (=15.5 mg/dl). Using FSBS as the dependent variable, multivariable, mixed logistic regression was conducted, with herd included as a random effect, to determine significant (p < 0.05) risk factors at the animal and herd levels.

Results
The final dataset included 932 successful first services, and 957 unsuccessful first services, with 356 (15.93%) first services excluded due to an inability to confirm success of the breeding using the established criteria. The high MUN group was associated with a 37% reduction in the odds of conception (b=-0.478) when compared to the low group (P=0.001). With respect to the other variables in the final model, as expected, increasing 24 hour milk yield on the closest test date and increasing parity were also significantly negatively associated with the odds of conception. While energy levels and energy-protein ratios were correlated with crude protein, it was crude protein levels that had the strongest negative association with odds of conception. Type of housing also had an impact on odds of conception. Compared to free-stall housing, tie-stall housing was associated with a significant reduction in the odds of conception.
**Significance**

Based on the current analyses, MUN levels above 15.5 mg/dl have a detrimental effect on first service breeding success, even after controlling for herd effects and other significant risk factors, including nutritional factors.


**Reducing the Dose of GnRH in Heat-Synch Programs in Dairy Cows**

*M. Bolourchi, DVM, PhD; A Naisari Naslaji, DVM, PhD; E. Sadeghpour Rochani, DVM; M. Omidi, DVM, PhD*

*Department of Clinical Sciences, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Tehran, P.O. Box 14155-6453, IRAN*

**Introduction**

One of the objectives of dairy cattle producers is to enhance the cost-effectiveness of the reproductive programs. This study was conducted to compare the effect of two doses of GnRH analogue (full dose and half-dose) used in Heat-Synch programs on pregnancy rates and days open of Holstein dairy cows.

**Materials and Methods**

Dairy cows (n=144) with a voluntary waiting period of = 50 days were randomly assigned into three groups. On Day 0 of the program, cows in group one (n=40) and two (n=45) received an intramuscular injection of 7.5 and 15 µg GnRH analogue (Luliberin, Aburaihan, Iran), respectively. On Day 7, cows in both groups were given an intramuscular injection of prostaglandin F2α analogue (500 mg cloprostenol, Aburaihan, Iran). On Day 9, cows in these groups received an intramuscular injection of 1 mg estradiol benzoate (Aburaihan, Iran). Estrous detection was performed within 48 hours after estradiol injection. Cows displayed standing estrus were inseminated with frozen semen. Those that did not display estrus were inseminated blindly at 48 hours after the estradiol injection. Cows in the third group (control) did not receive any treatment and were inseminated 12 hours after displaying standing estrus. Pregnancy was diagnosed by rectal palpation on Day 40 after AI. The number of days open and pregnancy rates were analyzed using ANOVA and Chi-square tests, respectively.

**Results**

The number of days open did not differ among experimental groups (Group one: 104.17±7.79 days, Group two: 106.28±6.24 days) and the control group (111.86±2.33 days) (P>0.05). Pregnancy rate to the first service was not different among groups (Group one: 47.5%, 19/40; Group two: 46.88%, 22/45; Group three: 32.2%, 19/59; P>0.05).

**Significance**

Reduction of the dose of GnRH analogue (Luliberin) to half of the full dose did not affect pregnancy rate and days open in dairy cows. Therefore, by using a half-dose of Luliberin, it is possible to enhance the cost-effectiveness of Heat-Synch program in dairy cows.
2004 AETA Annual Meeting
Tampa, Florida

Dr. Larry Kennel, President, and Dr. Tom Rea, Program Chair

Past Presidents’ Breakfast

New Board Members: Dr. Steve Hughes, Dr. Dave Duxbury

Evening Seminar

Small Discussion Group

Boarding for Dinner Cruise
New Officers: Dr. Ron Kling, Secretary; Dr. Pat Richards, Vice President; Dr. Tom Rea, President

O Canada!

Dr. Jim Griffin and Outgoing President Dr. Larry Kennel

Dr. Clifton Murphy and Dr. Bob Rowe

Banquet Entertainment

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Attention AETA Members!

Tech Talk Participation

The CETA/ACTE Tech Talk Program is an interactive notepad used to pose technical embryo transfer questions, results of clinical trials, or comments that are then distributed to the participants via email. The program is for both CETA/ACTE and AETA members. If you are interested in participating in this program, please contact the CETA/ACTE office at ceta@ebi.ca.

Membership Committee Letter

Dear AETA Members,

There has not been an AETA membership committee for a number of years. We missed several potential AETA members, and we need to try to get these potential members to join.

Please make an effort to recruit potential new members from your area. We have over 24 new members this year, but we have lost over two times that number to retirement, death, practice changes, and the cost of the assessment. We all need to work to keep our association growing. With any questions, please call Cheryl at 859-873-7319. Thank you for your help!

Respectfully,
AETA Membership Committee
Cheryl Nelson, Chair

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USLGE Annual Meeting

Due to popular demand, the meeting will again be held at the Golden Nugget Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada. The opening general meeting will begin at 8:30 a.m. on Wednesday, January 19, 2005 and will conclude at 12:00 p.m. on Friday, January 21, 2005. I encourage you to plan your arrival in Las Vegas on Tuesday, January 18, 2005.

The formal program will conclude with the USLGE Annual Meeting at 3:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 20. On Friday, January 21, a training session will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. for those members new to the program or those who wish to receive additional training on developing marketing activities. This schedule may permit some members to depart Thursday evening after 6:00 p.m.

USLGE will be handling the hotel reservations for rooms at the Golden Nugget, and the rate is $70/night. If you plan to spend the weekend at the hotel, the rate will increase to $110/night. We will need to advise the hotel to secure the rooms. Additional reservation and meeting details will be sent out shortly.

Regards,
Mike Phillips

Request for Information

Name: Oscar A. Varas.
Company: Veterinarios SDRL.
Address: 17 Calle, 7-8 ave.SO.No.32
City: San Pedro Sula
State/Province: Cortes
Country: Honduras
Zip/Postal Code: 00
Phone Number: (504) 5528910
Fax Number: (504) 5509235
E-mail: veterinarios@sigmanet.hn

Mr. Vargas is interested in finding a DVM to travel to Honduras to do the transfer work for embryos from Honduras. Please respond directly to Mr. Varas. Also, please indicate that you are responding to information provided by U.S. Livestock Genetics Export, Inc. (USLGE).
### Future Meeting Dates

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<tr>
<th>AETA</th>
<th>2005 Sept. 8 – 10 Minneapolis, MN</th>
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<td>IETS</td>
<td>2005 Jan. 9 – 11 Copenhagen, Denmark</td>
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<td>2006 Jan. 8 – 10 Orlando, FL</td>
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<td>AABP</td>
<td>2005 Sept. 24 – 26 Salt Lake City, UT</td>
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<td>2007 Sept. 20 – 22 Vancouver, BC, Canada</td>
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<td>2008 Sept. 25 – 27 Charlotte, NC</td>
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### A Closer Look

#### Advertising Rates for 2005

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<tr>
<td>Business Card</td>
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<td>¼ Page</td>
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<td>½ Page</td>
<td>$105 per issue</td>
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### Publication Schedule and Deadlines

**Issue**

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Ads are due the 15th of each issue month. If you would like to advertise in the next issue, please contact AETA at aeta@assochq.org or 217-398-2217.

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Dear Certified ETB,

Well, the EU has done it again. I was just notified by Dr. Kaman that the EU health requirements for imported embryos will change January 1, 2005. The significant change for our industry is that the semen-used embryos exported to the EU must qualify for export to the EU. This notification came in the form of a directive…it has already been decided…“That’s the way it is.”

I’m sure many of you will see the similarities between this directive and that which stopped embryo shipments to the EU because of BSE concerns and the feed restrictions in place at that time. One significant difference is that there were not any published data related to the transmission of BSE through embryo transfer. As soon as Wrathall’s article was published addressing that topic, the EU’s embryo ban was lifted quickly. Conversely, the reasoning for the present directive is that the EU can “standardize international trade regulations with regulations governing intra-community trade.” There is no scientific basis for these concerns. Further, issues regarding “standardization” could be more easily addressed by amending the intra-community regulations.

So, here we are again with a non-scientific trade barrier for embryos to the EU. In the short term, there is little that can be done. Short of some unforeseen miracle, this directive will become effective January 1, 2005. There is a process that will eventually bring the science into play here, and Dr. Kaman has already started those protests through the venues available. It will take some time. Be patient.

Meanwhile, we need your help. Dr. Kaman is seeking trade information regarding embryo shipments to the EU that resulted from matings to “unqualified” bulls. These matings represent a percentage of the total number of embryos shipped to the EU over the last 3 years. If each of you could compile that and get that information to me quickly, then we could give Dr. Kaman and the APHIS staff some more ammunition for this battle. !

I am urging Dr. Kaman to aggressively lobby for our ability to continue to ship embryos made prior to January 1, 2005 under some type of interim certificate. Stay tuned, and thanks for your help. Please join me in thanking Dr. David Duxbury for working on this matter as well. Thanks, Dave!

Also we will be adding this and any subsequent information to the AETA website and encourage you to check it frequently.

Sincerely,
Richard Whitaker, DVM
Chair, Government Liaison Committee
moodoc@megalink.net
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