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Research article

Effect of uterine size on fertility of lactating dairy cows

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Abstract

There are multiple reasons for reduced fertility in lactating dairy cows. We hypothesized that one cause of reduced fertility could be the overall size of the reproductive tract, particularly the uterus, given well-established uterine functions in many aspects of the reproductive process. Thus, the objectives of this study were to evaluate the variability in uterine size in primiparous and multiparous dairy cows and to analyze whether there was an association between uterine size and fertility, particularly within a given parity. Lactating Holstein dairy cows (n = 704) were synchronized to receive timed artificial insemination (TAI) on Day 81 ± 3 of lactation by using the Double-Ovsynch protocol (GnRH-7d-PGF-3d-GnRH-7d-GnRH-7d-PGF-56h-GnRH-16h-TAI). At the time of the last injection of PGF, uterine diameter was determined at the greater curvature using ultrasound, uterine length was determined by rectal palpation, and uterine volume was calculated from these two measurements. Blood samples were also taken to measure progesterone to assure synchronization of all cows used in the final analysis (n = 616: primiparous, n = 289; multiparous, n = 327). Primiparous cows had greater percent

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cows. Thus, there is a negative association between uterine size and fertility in lactating dairy cows with a larger uterus associated with reduced fertility, particularly for multiparous cows.

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Keywords

Uterus; Fertility; Dairy cow; Synchronization

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