

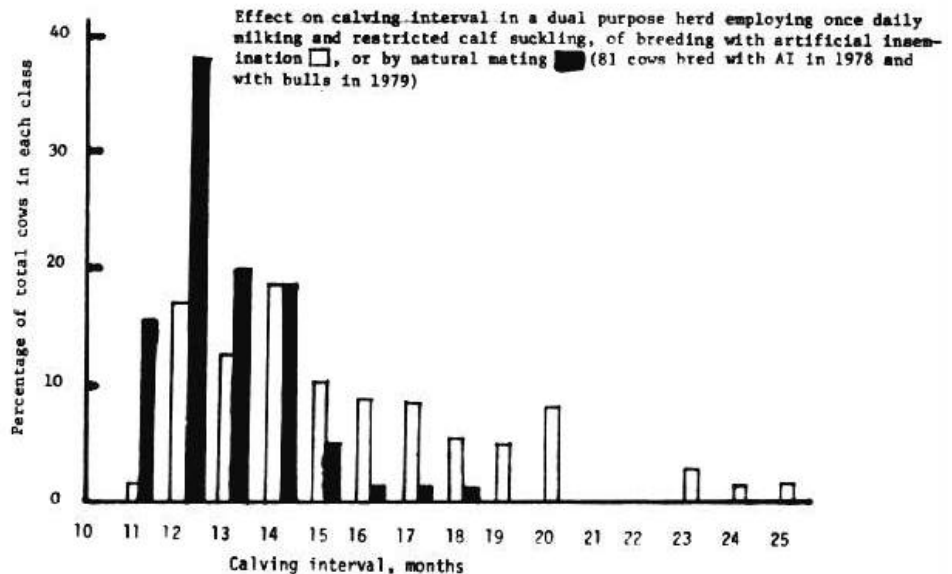
EFFECT OF ARTIFICIAL INSEMINATION OR NATURAL MATING ON CALVING INTERVAL IN DUAL PURPOSE HERD\*: BY G Naidoo, B Hulman and T R Preston, *Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and the Environment, Reduit, Mauritius*

In a milking herd employing restricted calf suckling 91% of cows had calving intervals less than 14 months for natural mating compared with 49% for artificial insemination. (Key words. cattle, calving interval, insemination, management, suckling)

It is often believed that the system of restricted calf suckling after milking leads to delay in oestrous, and an extended calving interval. If this were true, an interaction might be expected with breeding by artificial insemination (AI) or natural service, since the former depends on visual identification of oestrous.

Friesian heifers and cows were confined and fed local forages, molasses/urea and 4 Kg/d of concentrates. Milking was once daily. Calves were suckled twice daily for the first month and then once daily until weaning at 4 months.

Cows which calved in 1979 were bred mainly by AI (of 81 calvings 53 were from AI, 16 from natural service and 12 not recorded); Those which calved in 1980 had been mated exclusively by natural service. AI was mainly with fresh semen from Friesian and Creole bulls at the Government AI Station, and partly with frozen Simmental semen from West Germany. Natural mating was with Friesian and Creole bulls introduced, one per pen of 16 cows, two months after calving and remaining for a further 3 months.



Natural mating was much more effective with 91% of calving intervals less than 14 months compared with only 49% from AI

It is not known if this difference is due to the effect of calf suckling, or if other factors are involved. But in view of the economic importance of reproductive rate in dual purpose systems, natural mating is recommended as the preferred mating practise.

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