

Bovine Examination per Rectum

Instructor to student ratio: 1:3

Category

3. minor conscious intervention

Objective

Describes procedures for the thorough and systematic bovine rectal examination.

Alternatives to animal use

Knowledge of the anatomy, physiology and pharmacology of parturition are essential, and lectures, practicals, tutorials and video presentations of the procedure augment the success of the examination. There is no alternative to a rectal examination on the live animal.

Equipment

- a. Obstetric (Rectal) Gloves
- b. Obstetric Lubricant

Safety and Risk considerations

Restraint: In order to perform a rectal examination proper restraint is required. Please reference *SOP029: Mustering, Drafting and Yarding of Cattle* and *SOP028: Restraint and Inspection of Cattle* for this.

Ensure appropriate PPE is used to protect handler from accidental injury or exposure to blood and other body fluids. It is recommended to initiate the procedure from the side of the animal (displace tail and insert fingers or hand) to decrease risk of a kick injury. Always wash your hands after handling an animal.

Drugs, chemicals or biological agents

NIL

Procedure

Bovine Rectal Examination

- a. The animal should be properly restrained during this procedure.
- b. The rectal examination should be performed last if accompanied by a physical examination.
- c. Examine the perineal and tail area for any evidence of blood, mucus, discharge of faeces.
- d. Lubricate the obstetrical glove with an adequate amount and insert hand, beginning with tips of fingers, into the rectum. The arm should be inserted as far as needed to properly assess the entire reproductive tract and/or abdominal organs.

Impact on wellbeing of animals

If properly performed, this procedure causes minimal, or nil impact on animal well-being.

Potential for trauma

- a. Rectal tear indicated by blood on the sleeve
 1. Contact veterinary staff to examine the animal.
 2. If rectal tear confirmed contact the ACEC to inform about adverse event.

Animal Care

Observe animals for signs of excessive distress. If observed, discontinue use.

Pain Relief

The procedure caused no pain if conducted carefully, so pain relief measures are not needed.

Reuse and repeated use

In a teaching context, a cow can be palpated three times in a session (mean palpation duration 3 minutes)



for a total of 12 minutes in an hour with a 5/10 minute rest between each palpation. This can be repeated on alternate days for a maximum of two sessions per week.

Qualification, experience or training necessary to perform procedure

Demonstrator: Registered veterinarian having experience with these procedures. Thorough knowledge of the physiology, endocrinology and anatomy involved.

Students: Veterinary Science. Prior experience with handling cattle and background knowledge of anatomy, physiology and endocrinology is required.

References and relevant links

Jackson, P., & Cockcroft, P. (2008). *Clinical examination of farm animals*. John Wiley & Sons.