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Therapeutic management of non-infectious repeat breeder buffaloes using GnRH analogue

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Abstract

The study was conducted to determine the effect of GnRH (Buserelin Acetate) administration as a therapy for repeat breeding syndrome in 30 buffaloes. White side test was carried out to exclude the possibility of sub-clinical genital infection in these animals. The repeat breeder buffaloes which were found to be negative for White side test were divided randomly into three equal groups (n=10). The Group I buffaloes received GnRH analogue 10 µg at the time of insemination, Group II received GnRH analogue 10 µg at the time of insemination and another dose of GnRH analogue 10 µg on 12th day post insemination. Group III kept as control. The Vaginal Electrical Resistance (VER) values of pregnant (242±6.27) and non-pregnant buffaloes (262.04±7.07) differ significantly ($p<0.05$). The color of estrual mucus in repeat breeder buffaloes was 62.50% transparent, 37.50% translucent and 00.00% whitish. 16.67%, 45.83% and 37.50% of repeat breeder buffaloes were having thick, viscous and thin consistency of estrual mucus. The mean pH value of estrual mucus was 7.37±0.04. Conception rate in buffaloes is more when cervico-vaginal mucus on the day of estrus is transparent, viscous, with typical fern pattern, spinnbarkeit value more than 10 cm and pH ranges 7-8. Conception rate in repeat breeder buffaloes was 90%, 70% and 10% in Group II, I and III respectively.

Keywords: Repeat breeder buffaloes, GnRH analogue, vaginal electrical resistance (VER), estrual mucus

Introduction

Buffaloes are called as black gold of Indian farmers because of their adoptive nature in harsh climatic conditions, endowed tolerance to diseases and better survival under poor feeding and management practices. Repeat breeding is a major problem adversely affecting the productive and reproductive performance in buffaloes. The repeat breeding syndrome is defined as a condition in which dairy animal have a regular estrus cycle and appear normal on superficial clinical examination but fail to become pregnant following three or more breeding (Bartlett *et al.*, 1986) [7]. Repeat breeding results in delayed conception and longer inter-calving period and thus, reduces the economy of the dairy industry. The incidence of repeat breeding varies from 15-32% and seems to be lower in buffaloes kept individually on small-holdings than in large herds (Dhami *et al.*, 2009) [11]. Previous work has indicated that, delayed ovulation (Erb *et al.*, 1976) [14], inadequate luteal function (Kimura *et al.*, 1987) [18], embryonic death (Ayalon, 1984) [6], management errors (O'Farell *et al.*, 1983) [33] and non-specific uterine infection (Samad *et al.*, 1984) [43] are among some possible causes of repeat breeding. However, failure of fertilisation and early embryonic death are the two major groups responsible for repeat breeding (Tanabe and Casida, 1949) [51].

One of the major factors of repeat breeding in bovines may be delayed ovulation (Erb *et al.*, 1976) [14]. Luteal dysfunction leading to inadequate progesterone production during early luteal phase of the cycle could be a cause of early embryonic mortality (Pandey *et al.*, 2013) [34] leading to repeat breeding. Ahmad *et al.* (2002) [3] stated that GnRH analogue improved the conception rate in Nili Ravi buffaloes, when administered as a single dose at the time of AI rather than using in split doses. Mann *et al.* (1995) [25] reported that, GnRH administered at mid luteal phase suppressed the small pulses of PGF₂ α occurring from day 12 onwards and thus, reduced the strength of luteolytic drive. Therefore, the present investigation was aimed to study Vaginal Electrical Resistance (VER), physical characteristics of estrual mucus including colour, consistency, pH, arborization, spinnbarkeit value and white side test in repeat breeder buffaloes. Further, it was planned to assess the therapeutic efficacy of different line of GnRH (Buserelin Acetate) treatments in treating repeat breeder buffaloes.

Materials and Methods

The study was carried out in 30 repeat breeder buffaloes belonging to members of Bidar-Gulbarga Milk Producers Union, buffaloes presented to VGO-OPD, Veterinary College, Bidar and APMC Veterinary Hospital Bidar. The buffaloes, which failed to conceive to 2 to 3 or more insemination using good quality frozen semen / served by healthy fertile buffalo bull at regular cycling estrus without any reproductive tract abnormalities were selected for the study. These buffaloes were diagnosed for repeat breeding on the basis of history obtained by the animal owner (age, parity, number of AI / natural service done, history of dystocia / abortion / RFM, regularity of estrous cycle), per rectal examination, white side test and records.

Vaginal electrical resistance (VER)

VER was tested by estrus detector¹ on the day of estrus in all the repeat breeding buffaloes and values were recorded.

Physical characteristics of estrual mucus

Following confirmation of estrus, the cervico-vaginal mucus from buffaloes was collected aseptically in a sterile vial for studying various physical parameters / tests viz. color, consistency, pH, spinnbarkeit, arborization and white side test.

- 1. Color:** Color of cervico-vaginal mucus was observed and graded as transparent, translucent and whitish.
- 2. Consistency:** Consistency of cervico-vaginal mucus was observed and graded as viscous, thin and thick.
- 3. pH:** The pH of cervico-vaginal mucus was recorded using universal indicator pH paper.
- 4. Spinnbarkeit value:** A drop of cervico-vaginal mucus was spread on a clean glass slide and was lifted with the help of another glass slide along the side of a scale fixed vertically. The point of breaking up of mucus while lifting is the spinnbarkeit value recorded in centimeters.
- 5. Arborization pattern:** A drop of cervico-vaginal mucus was spread on a clean glass slide and air dried then observed under low power objective under microscope for appearance and presentation of crystallization pattern. The type of arborization was classified as per Vadodaria and Prabhu, (1989)^[54].
- 6. White side test:** One ml of cervico-vaginal mucus was mixed with equal volume of 5% Sodium hydroxide (NaOH) solution and heated up to the boiling point in a water bath for two minutes as described by Pateria and Rawal (1990)^[36].

Study model

The study was carried out in 30 repeat breeder buffaloes. These buffaloes were categorized into treatment (n=20) and control (n=10) groups.

The treatment buffaloes (n=20) were sub-divided into 2 groups i.e. Group-I, and II. The Group I buffaloes received GnRH analogue 10 µg at the time of insemination, Group II received GnRH analogue 10 µg at the time of insemination + another dose of GnRH analogue 10 µg on 12th day post insemination and Group III kept as control.

Follow up

All the buffaloes were inseminated in the subsequent 1st, 2nd and 3rd estrus periods if repeated after treatment. The

pregnancy was diagnosed per rectally after 60 days of A.I.

Statistical analyses

The data obtained was subjected for statistical analyses as per methods described by Snedecor and Cochran (1980)^[49]. Statistical analysis of experimental data was carried out by employing paired 't' test and ANOVA, using the "SAS 9.3" software which was procured from Indian Council of Agriculture Research under the NAIP project "Strengthening statistical computing for NARS".

Results and Discussion

Vaginal electrical resistance (VER)

The mean value of VER in non-infectious repeat breeder buffaloes was 249.13±6.93. The mean value of VER in pregnant repeat breeder buffaloes was 242±6.27 and in non-pregnant repeat breeder buffaloes was 262.04±7.07. The difference between the VER values of pregnant and non-pregnant animals was statistically significant ($p<0.05$). The conception rate is more when VER values are less on the day of estrus in repeat breeder buffaloes. Sharma *et al.* (2004)^[45] found significant association ($p<0.01$) between VER and non-return rates as well as with pregnancy rate ($p<0.05$). This result is in agreement with the findings of Meena *et al.* (2001)^[29].

Physical characteristics of estrual mucus

- 1. Color:** Non-infectious repeat breeder buffaloes exhibited 0.00% whitish, 37.5% translucent and 62.5% transparent color. Mehta (1986)^[30] reported that, 54.17% of repeat breeder animals had clean and transparent cervical mucus. Samad *et al.* (2002)^[44] reported that, estrus mucus was transparent in 55.00%, translucent in 38.33% and whitish in 6.67% repeat breeder buffaloes. Enkhia and Kohli (1982)^[13] found 50.00% transparent, 30.00% translucent and 20.00% yellowish in repeat breeder cows.
- 2. Consistency:** The estrual mucus consistency was thick in 16.66%, viscous in 45.83% and thin in 37.5% non-infectious buffaloes. Higher pregnancy rate of 59.09% was recorded in buffaloes having viscous type of estrual mucus discharge followed by thick (27.72%) then followed by 18.18% in thin mucus discharge. These results are in agreement with Vadodaria and Prabhu (1990)^[55]. In contrast, Sharma *et al.* (2011)^[48] recorded 44.44% in viscous, 33.33% in thick and 22.33% conception rate in thin vaginal mucus. Deo and Roy (1971)^[10] reported 59.10% and 32.90% of conception rates in buffaloes with thin and thick cervical mucus respectively. Gebhard and Schumacher (1970)^[15] reported that, profuse, watery and clear cervical mucus was favourable for sperm penetration and thick, scanty and opaque cervical mucus was unfavourable for sperm penetration.
- 3. pH:** The mean value of pH was 8.45±0.10 in infectious and was 7.375±0.04 in non-infectious repeat breeder buffaloes. The pH values are towards alkaline side. This is in agreement with Vadodaria and Prabhu (1990)^[55], Salphale *et al.* (1993)^[42], Samad *et al.* (2002)^[44], Kumar *et al.* (2011)^[19] and Ramsingh *et al.* (2013)^[38] but Tsiligianni *et al.* (2001)^[53] reported slightly acidic i.e. 6.5-6.7. Out of all repeat breeder buffaloes 72.72% conceived when the estrual mucus pH ranged from 7 to 8 followed by 13.63% conception rate in pH of both 7 and 8-9.

¹ Draminski Estrous Detector®, Electronics in Agriculture, Owocowa

- 4. Spinnbarkeit value:** The mean spinnbarkeit value of non-infectious repeat breeder buffaloes was 9.87 ± 0.88 cm. Sharma *et al.* (2011) [48] reported average spinnbarkeit value of mucus was 9.35 ± 0.66 cm which is in close conformity with Rangnekar *et al.* (2002) [40]. Dodamani (2000) [12] reported higher spinnbarkeit value (24.67 ± 1.32) in repeat breeding cows this value was in conformity of with Mohanthy *et al.* (1996) [31] and Choudri *et al.* (1997) [9]. Among all experimental repeat breeder buffaloes, 54.54% conceived when the spinnbarkeit value was more than 10 cm followed by 27.27% conception rate in spinnbarkeit value ranged from 6-10 cm and 18.18% conception rate in spinnbarkeit value from 1-5 cm respectively. Patil (1987) [37] and Sharma *et al.* (2011) [48] reported that, buffaloes that conceived had significantly higher ($p < 0.01$) mean spinnbarkeit value (12.94 ± 0.81 vs 7.91 ± 0.96 cm) as compared to those that did not conceive. But Jadhav (1996) [17] and Bennur (2004) [8] did not find such variation in fertile and infertile estruses and conceiving and non-conceiving cows (7.38 ± 5.60 and 8.05 ± 1.33 cm).
- 5. Arborization pattern:** Out of all experimental buffaloes, 45.00% typical, 55.00% atypical and 00.00% nil arborization pattern was observed. Luktuke and Roy (1967) [22] reported the cervical mucus fern pattern as typical (72.7%), atypical (18.2%) and nil type (9.1%). Pandya *et al.* (1987) [35] reported 35.71% typical, 44.24% atypical and 19.05% nil type of fern pattern in buffaloes. Kumaresan *et al.* (2001) [20] reported that, out of 69 buffaloes, 40, 16 and 13 showed typical, atypical and nil fern pattern. Conception rate of 57.5% and 18.57% were obtained in buffaloes with typical and atypical fern pattern. Samad *et al.* (2002) [44] indicated that, fern pattern was typical in 55% atypical in 45.0% and 0% nil in repeat breeder buffaloes. Sharma *et al.* (2011) [48] reported typical, atypical and nil fern pattern of mucus was observed in 39.34%, 42.63% and 18.03% buffaloes.

It is concluded that higher conception rate in repeat breeder buffaloes was noticed when cervico-vaginal mucus was transparent, viscous with typical fern pattern, spinnbarkeit value more than 10 cm and with pH range from 7-8.

Efficacy of GnRH analogue

The effects of GnRH treatment at A.I. on fertilization rates and embryonic mortality may be related to timing of ovulation and progesterone secretion by corpus luteum. McDougall *et al.* (1995) [27] reported that, an LH surge could be induced by treatment with GnRH. Several studies have reported that GnRH administration has positive effect on follicular recruitment, ovulation and development of large luteal cells of the corpus luteum (Mee *et al.*, 1993, Morgan and Lean, 1993 and Troxel, 1993) [28, 32, 52]. Aminu deen *et al.* (1991) stated that, GnRH has the properties of inducing a gonadotrophin surge which mimics to a pre-ovulatory endocrine surge. Sreenan and Diskin (1983) [50] concluded that, GnRH / hCG and progesterone have been successful to induce timely ovulation, sustain early pregnancy and improve conception rate in repeat breeding bovines.

An average of 70.00% repeat breeder buffaloes conceived with 2 services per conception in group III (GnRH on day of estrus). The present results are in accordance with the findings of Mandal *et al.* (2004) [24], Sah and Nakao (2006) [41], Honparkhe *et al.* (2009) [16] and Ahmed *et al.* (2010) [4]. The

present results are better than Rao and Rao (1984) [39], Ahmad *et al.* (2002) [3], Samad *et al.* (2002) [44] and Dhamsi *et al.* (2009) [11] and lesser than the findings of Sharma and Dhamsi (2008) [46], Markandeya and Patil (2008) [26] and Sharma *et al.* (2008) [47].

An average of 90.00% repeat breeder buffaloes conceived with 1.6 services per conception in group IV (GnRH on day of estrus + GnRH on day 12 post insemination). The present results are in accordance with the findings of Dodamani (2013) [34], Mandal *et al.* (2004) [24] and better than Pandey *et al.* (2013) [34]. MacMillan *et al.* (1985) [23] suggested that, GnRH analogue has both luteotropic and luteoprotective effect which helps in maternal recognition of pregnancy, also reported better conception rate when GnRH was administered on day 12 than that administered on day 7. Mann *et al.* (1995) [25] reported that, GnRH administered at mid luteal phase suppressed the small pulses of PGF₂α occurring from day 12 onwards and thus, reduces the strength of luteolytic drive. This resulted in prolonged life of CL resulting into secretion of sufficient progesterone required for pregnancy maintenance. Lopez-Gatius *et al.* (2006) [21] has demonstrated that, GnRH treatment at the time of insemination and 12 days later increases conception rate (35.4%) more than single injection at AI. Administration of buserelein acetate or hCG on day 12 post-ovulation has beneficial impact on conception rate in buffaloes through an improvement in the post-treatment luteal profile as revealed by better development of spontaneous CL, formation of accessory CL and an increase in plasma progesterone (Pandey *et al.*, 2013) [34].

It may be concluded from the present study that, GnRH analogue improved the conception rate in non-infectious repeat breeder buffaloes, when administered at the time of AI and day 12 after insemination rather than using GnRH once at the time of AI.

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