Genetic analysis of Atypical Progesterone Profiles in Holstein Cows

Nyman S., K. Johansson, D.P. Berry, D.J. de Koning, R.F. Veerkamp, E. Wall and B. Berglund

1 Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Sweden, 2 Växa Sverige, Sweden, 3 Teagasc, Animal & Grassland Research and Innovation Centre, Moorepark, Ireland, 4 Wageningen UR Livestock Research, The Netherlands, 5 Scottish Agricultural College, United Kingdom

AIM
Investigate the genetic parameters for progesterone profiles in Holstein cows. Is there genetic variation in atypical progesterone profiles that could be used to improve the breeding evaluation for fertility?

BACKGROUND

• Fertility in dairy cows has decreased
• Progesterone levels in milk can be used to identify cows with normal or atypical estrus cycles
• Earlier studies have shown that atypical progesterone profiles are associated with decreased fertility

4 DIFFERENT PROGESTERONE PROFILES

Normal profile

Delayed cyclicity

Cessation of cyclicity

Prolonged luteal phase

RESULTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>$h^2$ (SE)</th>
<th>$r_g$ (SE)</th>
<th>CI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delayed cyclicity</td>
<td>0.29 (0.047)</td>
<td>0.14 (0.19)</td>
<td>nc (c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prolonged luteal phase</td>
<td>0.02 (0.043)</td>
<td>0.42 (0.56)</td>
<td>nc (c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cessation of cyclicity (0-1)</td>
<td>0.00 (0.043)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLA (days) (a)</td>
<td>0.23 (0.041)</td>
<td>0.42 (0.11)</td>
<td>0.18 (0.53)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IOI (days) (a)</td>
<td>0.06 (0.092)</td>
<td>0.71 (0.16)</td>
<td>0.52 (0.73)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$^{a}$ CLA=Commencement of Luteal Activity and IOI=Inter-Ovulatory Interval
$^{b}$ Cessation of cyclicity had no genetic variation and was not included in the genetic correlation analysis
$^{c}$ nc=not converged

CONCLUSION
There is genetic variation in Delayed cyclicity and CLA that might be important for an improved breeding evaluation

MATERIAL AND METHODS

• 1122 multiparous Holstein-Friesian cows (1611 progesterone profiles) from Sweden, Ireland, the Netherlands and United Kingdom were analysed
• Milk progesterone sampling 1-3 times per week from calving to pregnancy
• Sire model to estimate genetic parameters

WHAT’S NEXT?
Genome wide association studies to identify regions associated to atypical progesterone profiles

Contact info:
Sofia.Nyman@slu.se
Britt.Berglund@slu.se