

...From His Point of View



*A series of opinions, advice and information
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The Semen Dilemma

We whitetail breeders are all aware of the tremendously rapid increase in the use of artificial insemination in our industry. What many of us are not aware of is the lack of parameters to judge the quality of this expensive stuff! Most semen we see advertised only provides us with the size of the straw (1/4 or 1/2cc straws) and how many live sperm cells were put into each straw (40 to 50 million for example). This sounds adequate but is actually quite useless! What is actually of utmost importance is how many of these sperm survive the thawing process? How many live for 2 hours after they are thawed? How many live 4 hours post thaw? Sperm of individual bucks varies greatly in how well it freezes, how long it lives post thaw and how vigorous it is post thaw. Since we are using the semen after it is thawed, those post thaw parameters are the only ones of importance. I believe that these changes will only be made if we breeders are aware of the problem and demand, as consumers, this information before we purchase semen!

Important Parasites of Whitetail Deer

Strongyles (stomach worms)- a group of harmful stomach and small intestinal

parasites. The eggs of most members of this group are very similar and difficult to differentiate from one another. They are all susceptible, however, to most of the common worming medications, so exact identification is not always necessary.

Coccidia- there are many species in this group and all of the eggs (oocysts) look similar. They can be devastating to young fawns 4 wks old and up to 11/2 yrs. They often cause diarrhea with flecks of blood and mucous. Especially prevalent in warm, moist weather. In older deer, look for unthrifty deer with dark feces on hair of rear end. Young fawns on a bottle can be treated with Albon (5cc per 10 pounds body weight the first day followed by 2.5cc per 10 pounds body weight every day for 10 days), a sulfa drug that tastes good and can be mixed with milk for bottle raised fawns. For older deer, Corid (amprolium) mixed with drinking water (follow label directions for dilution rates) is very effective.

Arterial worm- Interesting parasite that rarely causes serious disease, but is the main cause of "grass jaw" in deer and goats. This is the impaction of vegetation between the rear teeth and skin. It is a filarial worm, closely related to dog heartworms.

E.A.T. (enhanced antler technology)

Research has uncovered most of the nutritional elements necessary to maximize the genetic potential of whitetail antler production. Many feed companies are adding "pass through proteins", colloidal minerals, multiple trace elements, optimum fiber, fat and carbohydrates to their deer rations. There is one glaring flaw in all of this. All feed companies formulate these additive packages based upon "average" requirements. In other words, if your facility (ranch) is in Three Rivers, you get the same formula as a facility (ranch) in Kalamazoo. We all know that calcium, phosphorus, sulfur, copper, etc. vary greatly from region to region. What many of us don't know is that most feed companies will custom blend, at no charge, for each of our facility's specific requirements. They just have to know what those requirements are! If we want to be competitive, to produce the absolute best in antler development from the genetics we have spent so much time and money to obtain, we need to utilize every technology that is available. Whether our emphasis is on free ranging or on breeder deer, it will benefit us to get our animals to "E.A.T." right!