

Having trouble getting cows bred?

Check your thermometer

NorthStar-Select Sires, Lansing, Mich., conducted research on more than 600 dairy and beef farms in Michigan, Indiana and Wisconsin and found that one in every four thermometers used for thawing semen was inaccurate. In the study, 628 thermometers were tested for accuracy, and 26% (162) deviated 2° or more from the recommended thaw temperature of 95° F

Studies have shown that by all measurable standards, semen straws thawed in warm water (95° F) will provide better breeding efficiency than straws thawed in ice water, in air, in your pocket or in the insemination gun. Thawing semen in water that is too hot or too cold can result in loss of fertility.

Several steps are critical to conception; however, straw retrieval and thawing are probably the most important for maintaining high-quality semen. For best results, it is recommended that the following guidelines be used when thawing semen.

1. Use a set of forceps to remove one straw at a time from the top-most goblet and place in warm (95° F) thaw water.
2. It takes about 45 seconds for the semen to reach 95° F. Avoid thawing

more than three straws at once so the thaw temperature can be maintained.

3. After a straw has been thawed, protect it from cooling temperatures. (During cold weather [less than 50° F] warm the gun by rubbing it vigorously five or six strokes with a paper towel before loading. After loading, the gun should be wrapped tightly in a clean paper towel and tucked inside coveralls.)
4. The semen should be used as quickly as possible.

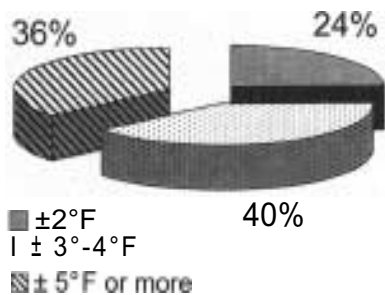
Accurate thermometer temperatures are vital to the success of a reproductive management program. Any thermometer



can be inaccurate at any time; therefore, it is recommended that thermometers be checked on a regular basis. Doing so will ensure accurate temperature readings for thawing semen. For more information on semen handling, contact NorthStar-Select Sires at 1-800-631-3510 or morthstarselectsires@ibm.net.



Range of inaccuracy* of thaw thermometers from standard (95° F)



*Note: Percentages of the 162 thermometers that deviated 2° or more are shown.