

Preface

Bovine Theriogenology



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Guest Editor

When Dr. Bob Smith honored me with an invitation to serve as guest editor for an issue on cattle reproduction, my initial reaction was to say, “Thanks, but no thanks.” It occurred to me, however, that this might be a good opportunity to promote the name of my veterinary specialty—theriogenology. The meaning of the word is still not widely appreciated, despite the fact that it is the name of a prestigious international scientific journal. When there are reproductive issues in human medicine, women visit an obstetrician and gynecologist, whereas men tend to seek out the advice of a urologist. Because veterinarians work with diverse reproductive problems in both genders, a new, all-encompassing term was proposed. The word theriomorphic means “thought of as having the form of a beast or animal,” and was used to refer to certain Greek gods. Genesis is well-known to mean creation, coming into being, the beginning or origin. The suffix “-logy” refers to the science or study of, a branch of learning. The name theriogenology was adopted because it means “the study of the coming into being of the beast,” that is, animal reproduction. The veterinary specialty of theriogenology embraces all aspects of animal reproduction (physiology, pharmacology, pathology, and surgery), including veterinary obstetrics, genital diseases, and the more recent “assisted reproduction” technologies. It is common practice to place the name of the relevant species with the term; thus the title of this issue of *Veterinary Clinics of North America: Food Animal Practice* is “Bovine Theriogenology.”

My hope is that readers will find this issue to be a very helpful addition to their personal library. The goal was to provide a broad update that would be

of use to private practitioners, faculty and students in veterinary schools, animal scientists, and extension specialists. To my colleagues who contributed to this endeavor, I offer my sincere thanks. I take no credit for the quality of this issue. Its merits are due to the expertise and diligence of the authors. As is the case with any publication of this type, the articles reflect the opinions of the authors—supported, as necessary, by pertinent scientific references. Some of the material in this issue does challenge widely accepted dogma. I fully expect that my own article will be controversial, and have endeavored to support my rationale by extensive referencing of the scientific literature. If it causes some clinicians to reconsider their approach to postpartum uterine therapy, and stimulates my scientific colleagues to pursue further research in this important area, then I will have achieved my objective. Perhaps the following quote will place my approach in the correct context. . .

“Perhaps the sentiments contained in the following pages are not yet sufficiently fashionable to procure them general favor; a long habit of not thinking a thing wrong gives it a superficial appearance of being right, and raises at first a formidable outcry in defense of custom. But the tumult soon subsides. Time makes more converts than reason.”

—Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*, February 14, 1776

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