

BEHAVIOURAL AND PHYSICAL CHANGES IN GOATS DURING THE OESTROUS CYCLE**Miss R. R. Thiagarajah***(Department of Physiology, Faculty of Medicine, University of Peradeniya)**and***B. M. A. O. Perera***(Department of Clinical Studies and Animal Science, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Sciences,
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Poor manifestation of oestrus and the difficulty in its detection are major obstacles in the application of advanced breeding techniques such as artificial insemination. The objectives of this study were to determine the length of the oestrous cycle, the duration of oestrus and the behavioural and physical changes occurring during oestrus. Female goats were examined twice a day for changes in their behaviour (restlessness, feeding, frequency of urination and fanning movements of the tail), and physical signs (swelling of the vulva, discharge of mucus, hyperemia and moistness of the vestibular mucosa) during 23 complete oestrus cycles.

SECTION A

The length of the oestrous cycle varied from 6-33 days (19.4 ± 6.3 days, Mean \pm S.D.). The majority of the cycles (68.4%) were of 19-25 days duration, while a few (15.8%) were of abnormally short length (6-8 days). The duration of the oestrus or "heat", based on behavioural and physical signs, varied from 6 to 48 hours (mean 28.4 hours). Behavioural signs lasted 25-56 hours in 47.9% of oestrus periods, while in 13.1% of periods no behavioural signs were exhibited. Some degree of physical signs existed in all oestrus periods. Of the behavioural signs, restlessness and frequent switching of the tail were present in 85% of the oestrus periods, and were more reliable indicators than decreased appetite or frequent urination. Hyperemia and increased moisture of the vestibular mucosa were more reliable physical signs of oestrus than vulval swelling and mucosal discharge.