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Title	Effects of the ovarian steroid hormone profile on the endometrial EGF concentration of the following estrous cycle in dairy cows [an abstract of dissertation and a summary of dissertation review]
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Citation	北海道大学. 博士(獣医学) 甲第15690号
Issue Date	2023-12-25
Doc URL	http://hdl.handle.net/2115/91258
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Туре	theses (doctoral - abstract and summary of review)
Additional Information	There are other files related to this item in HUSCAP. Check the above URL.
File Information	Vuong_Tuan_Phong_abstract.pdf (論文内容の要旨)



学位論文内容の要旨 Abstract of the dissertation

博士の専攻分野の名称:博士(獣医学)

氏名: Vuong Tuan Phong Name

学位論文題名 The title of the doctoral dissertation

Effects of the ovarian steroid hormone profile on the endometrial EGF concentration of the following estrous cycle in dairy cows

(乳牛における卵巣ホルモン濃度推移が次の発情周期での子宮内膜 EGF 濃度に及ぼ す効果)

Endometrial epidermal growth factor (EGF) has been shown as an indicator of endometrial function and fertility in dairy cows. In fertile cows, the endometrial EGF concentrations peak twice, on days 2-4 and 13-14, with lesser concentrations of EGF around day 7 (day 0 = estrus). The decrease or loss of the peak has been linked to reduced fertility in repeat breeder (RB) cows and high-yielding cows. The two periods: (1) between luteolysis and estrus (or ovulation) and (2) early luteal phase may be essential to understand reduced fertility from the point of view of ovarian steroid hormones. Since the expression of EGF in the endometrium is primarily regulated by estradiol (E₂) and progesterone (P₄), changes in circulating E₂ and P₄ concentrations may be amplified in the endometrium as an altered EGF profile. Therefore, I hypothesized that an alteration of E_2 and/or P_4 in one of the critical periods from luteolysis to estrus or ovulation (Chapter 1) and in the early luteal phase (Chapter 2) may induce the loss or decrease of EGF peak concentrations and reduced fertility. In Chapter 1, I examined the effect of the timing of luteolysis induced by prostaglandin $F_{2\alpha}$ (PGF₂ α) administration in relation to the stage of follicular development on the profile of E2 and P4 between luteolysis and ovulation and EGF concentrations on day 3 of the following estrous cycle. Cows were treated with PGF_{2 α} either on days 12 to 14 (selection phase group) or on days 16 to 17 of the estrous cycle (control group). Then, endometrial tissues were collected by biopsy on day 3 for EGF assays. Endometrial EGF concentration of cows with

both the normal and altered profiles was lower in the selection phase group than that in the control group (P < 0.05). The cows of the selection phase group showed lower conception rate than those of the control group (P < 0.05). In Chapter 2, I examined the effects of differing P₄ concentrations in the early luteal phase on the endometrial EGF concentration in the late luteal phase at the time of the second EGF peak and on day 3 of the following estrous cycle. Cows were either received an intravaginal P₄ device from day 5 to day 9 (day 0 = estrus, High P₄ group) or received PGF_{2α} treatments on days 3, 3.5 and 4 (Low P₄ group) or received no further treatment (Control group). Endometrial EGF concentrations were determined on day 14 of the cycle, and cows were allowed to show natural estrus. The endometrial tissue was obtained again on day 3 of the estrous cycle. On day 14, the proportion of cows that showed endometrial EGF concentrations lower than the lower limit of the normal range on day 14 was greater for Low P₄ compared with Control. On day 3 of the following estrous cycle, EGF concentrations in Low P₄ group were lower than those in High P₄ and Control groups (P < 0.05). The present study indicated that the alterations of E₂ and/or P₄ during different timing of estrous cycle in relation to the follicular developmental stages is one of the potential causes by which EGF concentrations in the following estrous cycle decrease and reduce fertility in the dairy cow.