Breeding injuries in heifers are not well documented. Young heifers housed with adult bulls are prone to injuries due to their size and may present under different complaints/clinical signs. We report here, an unusual presentation of a breeding injury in a young heifer.

A 2 year old British White heifer presented to WSU-VTH with a history of straining to defecate, urinary incontinence, abnormal ambulation, and anorexia. She was pastured with several cows and three bulls, all appearing normal. The heifer was quiet, alert, and responsive. Physical parameters were normal. Severe swelling, edema, and cellulitis was noticed in perianal area involving the right vulvar labium. A caudal epidural was administered. Transrectal palpation revealed a normal uterus and ovaries but severe edema and excessive straining inhibited palpation of the cervix and caudal vagina. Transrectal ultrasonography demonstrated a normal uterus, static right ovary and mature corpus luteum on the left ovary. A heterogeneous (43x24mm) mass with abscess-like appearance was observed in the vestibular vagina along with hypoechoic area in the dorsal aspect of the vagina, caudal to the bladder. A vaginal speculum could not be introduced beyond the vestibule. Dorsal-lateral tears were present in the vestibule and a large tear containing a friable mass was visualized at the vestibular sphincter. A flexible endoscope was introduced through the vulva to evaluate lesions. The urinary bladder was catheterized, allowing visualization of a communication with the dorsal vestibular tear.

A breeding injury was suspected. We hypothesize that a congenital anatomical malformation of the vestibulo-vagina contributed to the severity of the lesions. A poor prognosis for fertility was given and the owner was advised to cull the heifer. This case illustrates the importance of a complete clinical evaluation of the reproductive tract in heifers presenting with tenesmus, ill thrift, and abnormalities of the perineal area.