# Magnetic alignment in cattle and deer

Lesson for sceptics (Part 1)

### Recently (August 2008 and March 2009, respectively), we published two papers which both triggered immense publicity and resonance all over the world:

Begall S., Červený J., Neef J., Vojtěch O., Burda H. (2008): Magnetic alignment in grazing and resting cattle and deer. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences USA*, 105(36): 13451-13455.

Burda H., Begall S., Červený J., Neef J., Němec P. (2009):

Extremely low-frequency electromagnetic fields disrupt magnetic alignment of ruminants.

Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences USA, 106 (14): 5708-5713.

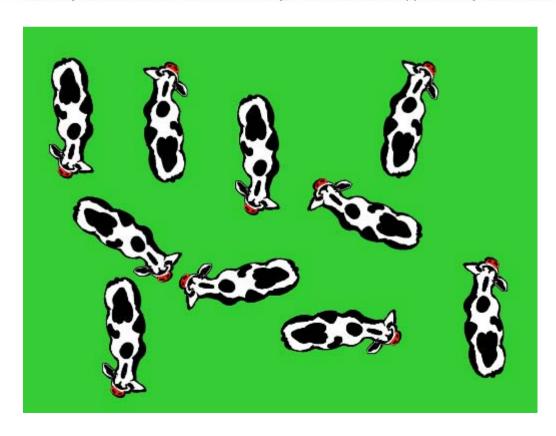
We provide here abstracts of both papers.

### Magnetic alignment in grazing and resting cattle and deer

Sabine Begall\*†, Jaroslav Červený‡§, Julia Neef\*, Oldřich Vojtěch‡¶, and Hynek Burda\*

\*Department of General Zoology, Faculty of Biology and Geography, University of Duisburg-Essen, 45141 Essen, Germany; §Institute of Vertebrate Biology, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, 60365 Brno, Czech Republic; †Department of Forest Protection and Wildlife Management, Faculty of Forestry and Wood Sciences, Czech University of Life Sciences, 16521 Praha 6, Czech Republic; and ¶Sumava National Park Administration, Susicka 399, 341 92 Kasperske Hory, Czech Republic

Edited by Simon A. Levin, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ, and approved July 17, 2008 (received for review April 15, 2008)



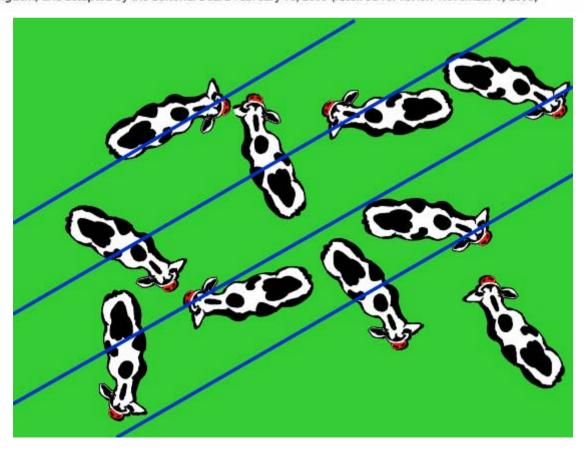
We demonstrate by means of simple, noninvasive methods (analysis of satellite images, field observations, and measuring "deer beds" in snow) that domestic cattle (n = 8,510 in 308 pastures) across the globe, and grazing and resting red and roe deer (n =2,974 at 241 localities), align their body axes in roughly a northsouth direction. Direct observations of roe deer revealed that animals orient their heads northward when grazing or resting. Amazingly, this ubiquitous phenomenon does not seem to have been noticed by herdsmen, ranchers, or hunters. Because wind and light conditions could be excluded as a common denominator determining the body axis orientation, magnetic alignment is the most parsimonious explanation. To test the hypothesis that cattle orient their body axes along the field lines of the Earth's magnetic field, we analyzed the body orientation of cattle from localities with high magnetic declination. Here, magnetic north was a better predictor than geographic north. This study reveals the magnetic alignment in large mammals based on statistically sufficient sample sizes. Our findings open horizons for the study of magnetoreception in general and are of potential significance for applied ethology (husbandry, animal welfare). They challenge neuroscientists and biophysics to explain the proximate mechanisms.

## Extremely low-frequency electromagnetic fields disrupt magnetic alignment of ruminants

Hynek Burda<sup>a,1,2</sup>, Sabine Begall<sup>a,1</sup>, Jaroslav Červený<sup>b,c</sup>, Julia Neef<sup>a</sup>, and Pavel Němec<sup>d</sup>

Department of General Zoology, Faculty of Biology and Geography, University of Duisburg-Essen, 45117 Essen, Germany; Department of Forest Protection and Wildlife Management, Faculty of Forestry and Wood Sciences, Czech University of Life Sciences, 16521 Praha 6, Czech Republic; Anstitute of Vertebrate Biology, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, 60365 Brno, Czech Republic; and Department of Zoology, Faculty of Science, Charles University in Prague, 12844 Praha 2, Czech Republic

Edited by Tim Guilford, Oxford University, United Kingdom, and accepted by the Editorial Board February 10, 2009 (received for review November 5, 2008)



Resting and grazing cattle and deer tend to align their body axes in the geomagnetic North-South direction. The mechanism(s) that underlie this behavior remain unknown. Here, we show that extremely low-frequency magnetic fields (ELFMFs) generated by high-voltage power lines disrupt alignment of the bodies of these animals with the geomagnetic field. Body orientation of cattle and roe deer was random on pastures under or near power lines. Moreover, cattle exposed to various magnetic fields directly beneath or in the vicinity of power lines trending in various magnetic directions exhibited distinct patterns of alignment. The disturbing effect of the ELFMFs on body alignment diminished with the distance from conductors. These findings constitute evidence for magnetic sensation in large mammals as well as evidence of an overt behavioral reaction to weak ELFMFs in vertebrates. The demonstrated reaction to weak ELFMFs implies effects at the cellular and molecular levels.

If you are interested in our studies, want to learn more, have doubts, ideas, please contact us and/or read the original articles.

Do not rely on secondary or tertiary articles in newspapers, magazines, internet news, blogs, radio, TV, etc., even if any of us is quoted as having said it - quotations are frequently torn out of the context, cut short etc.

If you do not have access to PNAS, feel free to contact us per email

sabine.begall@uni-due.de hynek.burda@uni-due.de julia.neef@uni-due.de pgnemec@natur.cuni.cz jardaryscerveny@centrum.cz

We shall send you a digital copy or a hardcopy reprint of the paper(s).

Coorla	·
GOOGIE	PNAS magnetic alignment Suche
0	Suche:  O Das Web O Seiten auf Deutsch O Seiten a
Google	
GOOXIC	magnetic cows Suche
	Suche: O Das Web O Seiten auf Deutsch O Seiten a
Coogle	
Google	magnetische Kühe Suche
0	Suche:  O Das Web O Seiten auf Deutsch O Seiten
Coorla	
GOOGIE	magnetické krávy Suche
0	Suche: O Das Web O Seiten auf Deutsch O Seiten a
C 1 - 11	
Google	vacas magnéticas Suche
0	Suche: Das Web C Seiten auf Deutsch C Seiten a
C - 1-	
Google	vaches magnétiques Suche
0	Suche: O Das Web O Seiten auf Deutsch O Seiten a
Coorla	
GOOGIE	магнитные коровы Suche
0	Suche: O Das Web O Seiten auf Deutsch O Seiten a

We have been very pleased that hundreds of people noticed our study, and wrote us emails and letters. Many people shared also their ideas, experience, know-how...

However, there were also many people who argued against our study and many of them do not seem to understand principles of science, animal husbandry or wildlife biology, or they do not have any expertise in ecology, ethology, sensory biology in general and magnetoreception in particular. Some of them ignored the statistics, and a few even do not know how to use Google Earth, who know cattle and deer only from pictures, who use arguments like "If I were a cow I would not do that ...". This is sad, but it is a consequence of today's industrialized world and we have to tolerate it. However, we would like to try to shed light on some misunderstandings. The typical example to illustrate the case is the discussion forum of NATURE

(http://www.nature.com/news/2008/080825/full/news.2008.1059.html) were wild, unfruitful speculations stopped only after we provided a detailled answer to all raised questions.

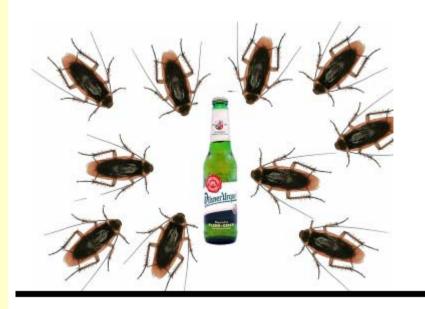
We hope you understand that we cannot be everywhere and get engaged in all the blogs and forums. That is why we decided to provide here some more supplementary information for all those who are interested.

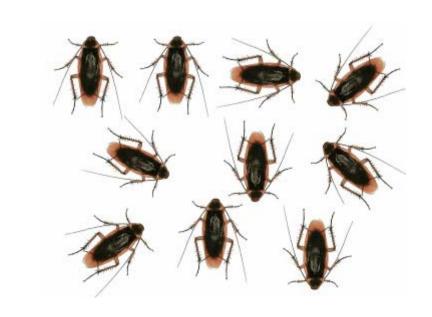
Before we start our first lesson, let us stress out what we studied. We have studied

#### magnetic alignment

i.e. a "spontaneous behavioural expression of magnetoreception that appears particularly in resting animals when body orientation is not controlled by other factors" (Wiltschko & Wiltschko, 2000).

it means, we do not claim that cattle and deer are slaves of the magnetic compass and that other factors (like wind, Sun position, slope, curiosity, etc.) do not have any effect upon body alignment of these animals. The question is, if these factors are not stressful, would these animals tend to prefer to align in any certain compass axis? Note that magnetic alignment is a statistical phenomenon. Not all the individuals show it at the same time.





The first lesson addresses the frequently raised claim that,

Images of Google Earth do not have a sufficient resolution to recognize the cattle and/or to enable measuring its body axis orientation, and if so this measurement is subjective, not replicable.

We provide here a sample of some few images from our collection. There are 75 herds depicted here, some of them divided into two screenshots. Not all herds consist of cattle (there are some horses as well), but it is a good excercice to learn how to distinguish.

We provide also geographic coordinates because in most cases, we provide just an overview of the pasture, but you can zoom even closer in the Google Earth and enlarge the animals (as is the case in Fig. 001).

The first screenshot and the subsequent pages show the mode of measurement. You should measure the degree of body axis in all the animals of each herd separately. We did not measure calves. You may compare the results you have got and the results your friend has obtained; or you may check how big is the error if you compare your own measurements carried out with a pause of one week between both measurements. Or send us your results so that we can compare it with ours and with results of other interested people who will respond.

#### Important message:

This sample - which represents just a small portion of our collection of screenshots is provided here for private purposes (i.e. for study) to all those people interested in the problem of magnetic alignment in cattle (and other animals).

Journalists etc. who wants to circulate these images should be aware that the copy rights are with Google Earth<sup>TM</sup>.

To publish these (or other) images please contact Google Earth<sup>TM</sup> and clarify copy right issues.

