# Table of Contents

1 Introduction and Motivation.................................................................................. 1

2 Literature Survey.................................................................................................. 2

2.1 Bovine Granulosa Cells...................................................................................... 2

2.1.1 Morphology ................................................................................................. 2

2.1.2 Function ...................................................................................................... 5

2.2 Perfusion Culture.............................................................................................. 9

2.2.1 Perfusion Culture for Granulosa Cells......................................................... 9

2.2.2 The Perfusion Apparatus ............................................................................ 13

2.3 Declining Fertility in Dairy Cows and the Link to Granulosa Cell Function .. 14

2.3.1 The Influence of Negative Energy Balance on Fertility ......................... 14

2.3.2 The Influence of Negative Energy Balance-Related Metabolites on Granulosa Cell Function .................................................................................. 17

3 Materials and Methods......................................................................................... 20

3.1 Cell Culture....................................................................................................... 20

3.1.1 Media ........................................................................................................ 20

3.1.2 Establishment of the Bovine Granulosa Cell Perfusion Culture .......... 21

3.1.3 Influence of Agents Possibly Linking Nutrition to Reproduction on Bovine Granulosa Cell Perfusion Cultures ......................................................... 30

3.2 Real-time RT-PCR for Key Receptors and Enzymes Linked to Steroidogenesis................................................................................................................. 33

3.2.1 Extraction of RNA from bGCs ................................................................. 33

3.2.2 Reverse Transcription of RNA into cDNA ............................................. 34

3.2.3 Real-time RT-PCR detecting Aromatase, 3β-Hydroxysteroid Dehydrogenase, FSH-Receptor and LH-Receptor .............................................. 34

3.3 Radioimmunoassay......................................................................................... 36
3.3.1 Collection, Preparation and Storage of Media Samples for Radioimmunoassays

3.3.2 Radioimmunoassay for 17β-Estradiol

3.3.3 Radioimmunoassay for Total Estrogens

3.3.4 Radioimmunoassay for Progesterone

3.4 Consumables and Laboratory Equipment

3.4.1 Consumables

3.4.2 Laboratory Equipment

3.5 Statistical Methods

4 Results

4.1 Establishment of the Bovine Granulosa Cell Perfusion Culture

4.1.1 Determination of HEPES-Buffer Concentration for the CO₂ Independent Culture System

4.1.2 Isolation of Bovine Granulosa Cells

4.1.3 Investigation in Different Materials Concerning their Applicability as Granulosa Cell Carriers

4.1.4 Comparison between Static and Perfusion Cell Culture System

4.2 Influence of Metabolites Possibly Linking Nutrition to Reproduction During Negative Energy Balance

4.2.1 Influence of Urea on Granulosa Cell Function and Cell Numbers

4.2.2 Influence of ß-Hydroxybutyric Acid on Granulosa Cell Function and Cell Numbers

5 Discussion

5.1 Establishment of the Bovine Granulosa Cell Perfusion Culture

5.1.1 Medium Composition

5.1.2 Retrieval of Bovine Granulosa Cells

5.1.3 Investigation of Different Materials as Support for Bovine Granulosa Cells

5.1.4 Comparison of Static and Perfusion Cell Culture