**First-Degree Prolapse.** The floor of the vagina protrudes intermittently through the gaping vulvar cleft, usually only when the cow is lying down. This stage may go unnoticed. The vagina becomes irritated by exposure to sun, wind, dust, cold temperature and fecal contamination. If parturition is not imminent, the continued vaginal irritation may produce tenesmus, which leads to the next stage.

**Second-Degree Prolapse.** The floor of the vagina is in continuous prolapse. If neglected, the bladder may be reverted into the prolapsus, kinking the urethra and interfering with urination. Exposure to external irritants is protracted. The problem is obvious even to the casual observer.

**Third-Degree Prolapse.** The cervix and almost the entire vagina are prolapsed. This may happen without progression through the first and second stages and is dependent on flaccidity of the vagina and lack of support of the perivaginal tissue. Third-degree prolapse is common in Santa Gertrudis cows with chronic cervical enlargement. If the cervical seal is materially disturbed, there is danger of imminent septic abortion. Regardless of the method of repair, the cow should be kept under close observation. Repeated attempts to detect viability of the fetus may aggravate the irritated vagina but may be worthwhile. Signs of toxemia indicate fetal death.

**Forth-Degree Prolapse.**The prolapse is of prolonged duration. Deep necrosis has ensued, and there are adhesions between perivaginal tissue and adjacent organs, especially the bladder. Peritonitis is present or imminent. The prognosis for the dam is poor.

Frequently, unattended prolapse is complicated by prolapse of the rectum. Some authors favor amputation of the prolapsed rectum in these cases.This author chooses to dispense with amputation if at all possible, depending instead on replacement and purse-string suture.

Source: <http://www.developmentvet.aun.edu.eg/animal%20surgery/se5.htm>