

Cambridge Vets Dairy Update

Keeping you informed

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October 2009

Mating time is here ..Again!!!

Lots of things affect mating but for many of them it is too late for this season! So what is important now?

- Feed your cows as well as possible. Don't take silage unless it is truly surplus. Monitor feeding levels carefully.
- Heat detection, Heat detection, HEAT DETECTION!!!! Get out there and watch the cows, observe tail paint carefully, get up and look!
- Treat non cyclers. Early is best. The treatment pays for itself and improves calving pattern long term.
- Bulls for cows and heifers. Plenty of bulls. This is one of the biggest areas of poor mating performance we see. You need minimum of one fit healthy fertile bull with the cows per 30 cows to be mated. More with heifers if you want a really tight calving. If you are going to rotate the bulls you will need twice as many. So for a 250 cow herd with 3 weeks of AB with an 80% submission rate you will have 150 cows still to get in calf when the bull goes out. That is 10 bulls per 250 cow herd following 3 weeks of AB. The longer you AB the less bulls you need) See over.
- Magnesium, Selenium and Copper levels need to be adequate to get good reproductive performance.

What can we do now to improve reproduction for next season?

- Cow condition at calving is important, need to plan autumn feed now to hold or build cow condition. You also need to plan feed for next winter/spring. Will it be maize/PKE/crop/grass silage/graze off or a combination? Feed budget for it. If you don't do it now it wont be able to happen economically.
- Grow heifers well. Monitor weight gain to hit targets. This is from birth to first calving.
- Do a good job with this years mating! Calving pattern is a work in progress. The better your results this year the better in future years.
- Plan to feed cows well after calving to minimise condition loss.

Magnesium Issues

The recent appalling weather conditions have really put pressure on magnesium levels, especially in herds relying on water treatment to get magnesium into the cows.

Milking cows put a lot of magnesium out in the milk. The harder they milk the more they put out and hence the more they need.

We are seeing and hearing of milkers down commonly at present. Low magnesium affects the cows calcium system and hence can cause milk fever. Treat these cows as milk fever cases but also give them some magnesium (Mag sulphate under the skin/ Magnesium oxide drench/More Mag drench) and review your magnesium dose and form of supplementation. We are also seeing poor appetite and hence poor production in herds with low magnesium levels .

Sunshine levels have been down and hence energy levels in pasture are down. Energy is required to absorb magnesium from the gut into the blood of the cow

Potassium is high in pasture. Potash is taken up at high rates by rapidly growing pasture. This can block the absorption of magnesium from the gut by the animal. Magnesium is needed at a constant level every day as any excess is urinated away. Treating every second day or irregularly will not help the cow.

Dose- high producing cows need 20gm of magnesium per day. This is equal to 40gm of Magnesium Oxide or 200gm of magnesium chloride or sulphate. At this rate the chloride or sulphate may cause diarrhoea so we don't recommend more than 100gm combined of these in milking cows. Some of this will come from the diet but at this time of the year with the current conditions we need to give at least 75% of this in supplements.

The administration method is important. Water systems are challenged during high rainfall and limited by the dose they can give. Also limited by individual cow variations in intake. Drenching is best method, twice daily may be required. Feed administration is OK if all stock are eating supplement.

Careful management of fertiliser, especially potassium, is important to ensure minimum effects on magnesium in the cows.

Where is the vet advisor?

Good question! We are currently designing a new format for this combined with changes and improvements to our web site. We hope to bring you up to date, relevant information more often.

FertilityFocus report

This is a key feature of the InCalf project being run by DairyNZ. It is a quick and easy way of benchmarking your herds reproductive performance. It is available in Minda and Maestro. It is in the reports section of Minda under "Reproductive analysis" We have trained InCalf advisors to help you use this tool to pinpoint areas that will lead to improvements in your herds performance .

Returns from treating anoestrus	Control	CIDR/CUE
Additional income:		
Extra days in milk	0	16
Kg MS/day	1.6	1.6
\$/kg MS	\$5.10	\$5.10
Value of extra milk	\$0	\$130.56
% extra AB calves	0%	10%
Value AB calf (over bobby)	\$150	\$150
Value of extra AB calves	\$0	\$15.00
Extra costs:		
Treatment cost (\$/cow)	\$0	-\$40.00
Additional feed costs(\$/cow)	\$0	-\$28.80
Reduced costs:		
%reduced non-cyclers next season	0%	12%
Less treatment cost next season(\$/cow)	\$0	\$4.80
Net return on treatment(\$/cow)	\$0.00	\$81.56

How long should I AB my herd?

Lots of people ask this question and in tough times, when costs are being watched, it is important. But it is not as simple as it may seem. The answer to this question depends on how many replacements you need or want. In a 250 cow herd with a 20% replacement rate you will need 50 2 y.o. heifers to calve. To allow for empties and the possible loss of animals in the rearing and growth process you will need more heifer calves than this say 60 calves born. To get 60 heifers we need 120 calves and to get this with a 50% pregnancy rate to each AB mating we need to have 240 AB matings. In other words every cow in the 250 cow herd needs to be AB mated once. Even with a 90% submission rate (Which is hard to achieve) it will take at least 4 weeks of AB in most herds to get the number of AB matings needed to give you the replacements you need. So how long will you do AB for? Work out how many AB matings you need then see how things are going before you decide. Don't stop too soon if you do not want to risk being short on replacements.

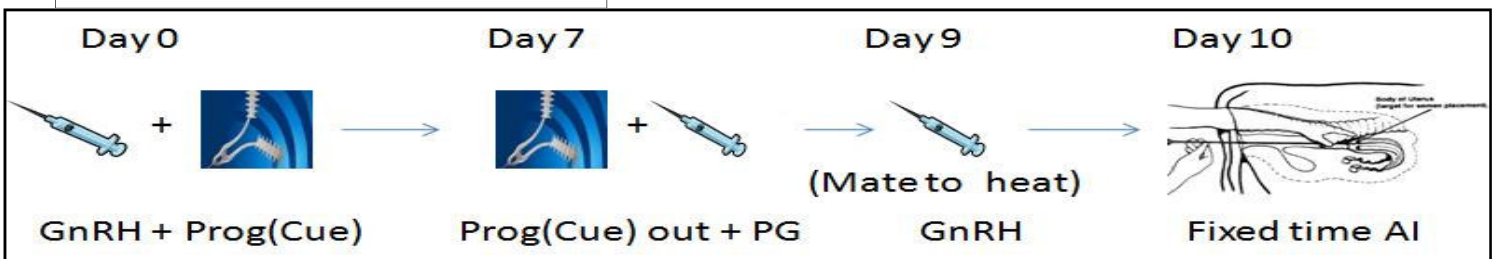
The basic rule of thumb is to times the number of live heifer CALVES you want by 5 to give you the number of AB matings required to get the calves you need. Remember that if you shorten your AB, you will need more bulls than usual (See over)

Drafting Non Cyclers for us to examine

When you are drafting your non-cyclers for us to examine consider the following points.

- If the cow has not been calved for 35 days we cannot treat her. Only draft these cows if you wish us to check them for post calving infection.
- It may seem obvious but any cows likely to be culled should not be drafted.
- Lamé cows or cows that are sick or in very poor condition do not respond well to treatment. We need to get these cows well before they will cycle so draft them separately and get the vet to concentrate on get-

Anoestrus cow treatment program



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Clinic Hours

Mon-Wed 8am - 7pm
 Thurs-Fri 8am - 5 pm
 Sat 9am - 12.30pm