



## Newsletter June 2018

### VERY IMPORTANT

**Is your farm part of the RED TRACTOR scheme? Beef, sheep and 95% of dairies.**

**As of 1st JUNE 2018 if you use CRITICALLY IMPORTANT ANTIBIOTICS (without a culture and sensitivity test), you will FAIL your audit.**

**These include Marbox, Cobactan, Cevaxel RTU, A180, Cephaguard DC.**



**Red Tractor Assurance**

**Please see attached flyer and speak to us if this affects you and you wish to discuss.**

### Pasture Management of Dry Cows

It's great to see cows finally out, however turning out dry cows in the 3 weeks before calving can be problematic. Poor pasture management can lead to milk fever cases, fatty liver disease and high mastitis rates.



#### Milk fever

Grass is too high in potassium for older dry cows which leads to a higher dietary DCAB (Dietary Cation-Anion Balance). This will impair the cow's ability to release calcium from her bones which is needed to replace the sudden loss of calcium to her milk at calving. Prevention should be straight forward. Restrict grazing to limit the intake of fresh grass.

Supplement cows with forages lower in potassium such as hay or round bale silage. You can also consider supplementing drinking water with magnesium chloride which will offer a source of magnesium and lower the DCAB. Magnesium boluses can also be useful as magnesium is involved in milk fevers.

Treatment in emergency cases requires intravenous calcium administration with preparations such as the Calciject 40CM number 5 (Red top). Subcutaneous calcium or even better, oral calcium (BoviKalc) help prevent relapses by offering a controlled supply of calcium over the next day or so.

#### Mastitis

It is well documented that bugs acquired during the dry period often account for high mastitis rates in the first 30 days after calving. At grazing this can occur when dry cows are left on stale paddocks for too long.

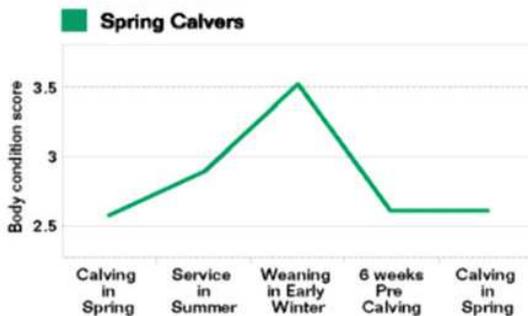
The rule is "2 weeks on, 4 weeks off". 4 weeks allows the bugs time to die off. By splitting the dry paddock in three and moving the cows and buffer feed every two weeks we get the best of both worlds; fresh accommodation and limited grazing. Teat sealants such as Orbeseal are also very useful to prevent the ingress of mastitis bugs during the dry period.

## Controlling Body Score Condition (BCS) in your Beef herd to maintain good fertility

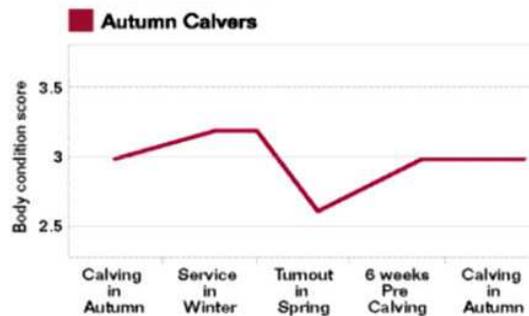
After calving it is normal for cows to have a period of anoestrus (acyclicity) when the ovaries are inactive. In beef cows the 2 main factors which influence the length of the anoestrus period are:

- body condition at calving
- suckling by the calf

In most beef suckler herds avoiding suckling by the calf is obviously not possible, controlling BCS is extremely important in maintaining a short calving interval and overall good fertility. **However this does not mean feed them more when they are about to calve or just after!** BCS must be closely monitored and if changes are needed they must happen over a long period of time. Here are the recommended BCS targets for spring and autumn calvers:



Spring calvers should be in good body condition in late autumn, allowing planned weight loss over winter. However, excessive weight loss should be avoided as this can delay the return to oestrus after calving and reduce colostrum quality. A delay in weaning at the start of winter can have similar consequences.



For autumn calvers, excessive body condition after summer grazing can lead to calving difficulties. Restrict the cow's access to pasture or delay weaning if this is a problem.

## Know when to breed your heifers!

Planning the integration of heifers into the herd is critical for good lifetime fertility performance. Heifers that have reached **65% of mature cow body weight** should be cycling and ready to breed.

For herds breeding their own replacements for 2 year old calving this means a target body weight of 420kg at 15 months (assuming a mature cow weight of 650kg).

This requires an average daily LWG of around 0.85kg from birth. Rather than breeding all heifers based on age, it is better for the animal to breed them based on weight to reduce difficult calvings and therefore reduce the number of times we will visit you at 2am to do a caesarean!



Your local farm veterinary service

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