



FERTILITY & BREEDING

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NOTE:

**1st July mating is the
10th April 2018 calving**

Short gestation sires 1st July mating
is the 3rd April 2018 calving



KEY POINT: The next three weeks are key to reducing the number of empty cows at year end. Gain 1 week and 14kg milk solids per cow with short gestation sires. Ensure you retain 80% of the current herd for 2018.

1. Intensity of heat detection. Focus on those not yet confirmed pregnant.

Intensity of heat detection is crucial now. Very few cows are coming on heat so each cow will just have 10 mounts each. A vasectomised bull is invaluable at this stage. Scratch cards work well at this time of year.

2. Pregnancy Diagnosis.

Identify empty cows now. Pregnancy diagnose all cows now that have not repeated and are more than 30 days since the last service and are assumed pregnant. This is a hugely beneficial in identifying empty cows and giving them an opportunity of 1 or 2 services before the season ends. Even if you have bulls left off this is worth doing.



3. Short Gestation Sires.

The average beef bull has a gestation length of + 3 days. Very easy calving & short gestation AI sires are available that will reduce gestation length by 5 days. This will give you an extra 8 days in milk in early lactation adding 14-16 kg of milk solids worth approx. €80. Use these sires now.

4. Synchronization and fixed timed AI is working well on farms.

Late calving cows that are calved 35 days and cows that are identified empty can be synchronised. This programme was outlined in last month's Milk matters.

Synchronisation on the 1st of July means inseminating cows on the 11th July, repeats are due on the 31st July. This gives the opportunity of two mating's before the season ends, ensuring the cow will remain in the herd.

STOCK BULLS

1. Prior to releasing the stock bulls have your vet fertility test them. Secondly ensure that they are working. Watch out for young bulls especially.
2. Continue inseminating for the 1st fortnight after the bull is released, this will maximise fertility. It will also ensure you will avoid a lull in calving next April. It will give the bull time to adjust and familiarise himself to his new routine.
3. Continue inseminating until you have only a cow coming into heat every second day. At that stage, the bull will be able to cope very well.
4. If you have more than 1 bull rotating them every 24 hours and resting them will maximise fertility. This avoids bulls fighting and reduces the number of mating's each bull does therefore maximising fertility. Leaving all the bulls with the cows results in most cows being mated with 2 or more bulls and a reduction in the semen quality & quantity at each ejaculate.
5. If the bull goes lame or gets hurt remove him from the cows and treat him immediately. Do not be concerned about the administration of antibiotics or anti inflammatories drugs to the bull if prescribed by your vet. There is an old wife's tale that antibiotics and anti-inflammatories reduced fertility - this is incorrect, it is elevated temperature, pain and swelling that causes reduces fertility.
6. Young bulls need to be fed during the season to minimise weight loss to 50 kg. Bulls are hardworking animals and need energy for maintenance, growth and activity. The bull will not give himself time to eat as he will be continually following cows in heat and those coming into heat. 2- 4Kg of a beef ration is ideal, this can be given at each milking.

BEEF ON THE DAIRY HERD PROGRAMME

Partnerships between the dairy herd producers of calves and the finishers can be developed.

Munster has a specific beef on dairy breeding programme to address the needs of dairy herdowners. 2017 saw good beef calf prices add significantly to the income of dairy farmers.

Beef bulls for the dairy herd need to:

- Be easy calving,
- Have short gestation
- Have excellent quality calf with the correct colour markings.

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Easy calving and short gestation are key as we are using these bulls on our later calving cows who tend to be calving in a higher BCS. We also need to bring these cows forward in calving date and increase their days in milk. Difficult calving's ties up labour and reduce subsequent fertility. The average beef bull has a gestation length of + 3 days.

ULTI-MATE Beef Sires							
Code	Name	Breed	Calv Diff %	Rel %	Breed Av. Calv Diff %	Gest days	Replacement Index (across breed stars)
KYA	CORNAMUCKLA LORD HARDY K222	AA	0.7	99	2.2	-4.6	★★★★★
AA2123	CHRISTON ELTON P623	AA	1.6	92	2.2	-4.1	★★★★★
RGZ	TUBRIDMORE GIZMO E.T. (ET)	AA	2.6	99	2.2	-1.0	★★★★★
HE2043	SOLPOLL 1 KENTUCKY KID PP HYF	HE	3.4	98	3.95	-1.1	★★★★★
HE2408	NETHERHALL 1 OZ DAFFY M040	HE	2.3	72	3.95	-0.3	★★★★
BB2083	RACHID DE REMICHAMPAGNE	BB	7.5	71	12.8	-1.0	★★
These sires are specifically selected for their exceptionally short gestation and high conception rate figures							



KYA is the shortest available beef sire for dairy cows available at -5 days, his calves are very saleable despite his calving figure 0.7%. His progeny from the dairy are meeting the market specifications for the Angus scheme.

AA 2123 is -4 days in gestation with 0.6% calving difficulty, his first crop of calves was born this spring and were very saleable with a high satisfaction rating and they seem to be growthy.

RGZ is the sire for those finishing or carrying their cattle to the store stage, he is 2.6% calving, -1 day in gestation with excellent carcass confirmation and weight.

HE 2043 is the magic combination of calving ease, short gestation, polled and excellent calf quality. His calves are excellent sellers with tremendous thickness and shape.

HE2408 another polled sire had his first crop of calves born this spring, he is 2.3% calving and very saleable calves.

ZAG, a Limousin bull, is a superb bull to use on dairy cows to produce high index replacement heifers for suckler farmers in the BDGP scheme. These are likely to command a high premium.

Carcass market specifications for the Angus & Hereford schemes:

The challenge is to meet these market specifications with easy calving short gestation genetics.

Conformation	O= or greater
Fat score	2+ to 4=
Carcass weight	280 – 320 kg Minimum carcass weight for bonus scheme of 220 kg for a heifer and 230 kg for a steer Maximum carcass weight 380 kg for breed bonus

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KEY POINT: This panel of sires are the best available worldwide for the dairy herd where you can have confidence in the extreme easy calving and short gestation and benefit from the exceptional calf quality and resulting calf price. Real money earners.

For your own stock bull or for any intended purchase check out his figures, go into **www.icbf.com** and you will see 'bull search' put in the tag number of your bull and press search, you will have available all his figures and their reliability.

Pregnancy Testing through your Milk Recording



Munster are offering a service through the milk recording whereby the samples can be tested for pregnancy once the cow is pregnant 30 days. This is a very convenient, cost effective service that is 95% accurate. You can decide which cows you need tested and inform your milk recorder. At the next recording, you can do a different batch as they become due. Now is a very effective time to pregnancy test these cows, as any that are empty will be identified and allow you to get two mating's into them prior to the season ending.

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Calf rearing 2018 - Plan Now

Replacement heifers are costing in the region of €1,500 to get them into the milking parlour. It takes an average of 1.65 lactations before she has paid for herself, then she begins to contribute to the bottom line. To maximise profitability we need to have a herd averaging 5.5 lactations.

Calf rearing is crucial to achieving these targets. Doubling the birth weight in the first 6 weeks of life enhances future production and fertility greatly.



Cryptosporidium - Prevention is better than cure.

Cryptosporidium has increased significantly in the last number of years, increased number of calving's in the calving shed and reduced immunity will predispose to this. It has a devastating impact on farmers affected as there is:-

- No Vaccine
- No Cure
- Significant calf rearing stress with extra care and feeding required
- Poor whole of life performance for affected animals



KEY POINT: July is the month to clean the calving and calf rearing pens to help ensure an uneventful calf rearing season in 2018.

Recommended procedure for cleaning calving and calf rearing pens and houses

Kenocox is a useful product to use as it is effective against both cryptosporidia and coccidia.

- 1.** All dried faeces and other dirt should be removed from the walls, floors and gates of the pens. These cryptosporidium oocysts are protected somewhat from dehydration in dried faeces, so any faeces remaining from the previous year's calves needs to be removed.
- 2.** All surfaces should be power washed and preferably steam cleaned to remove all dirt from within cracks and crevices on the walls and floors.
- 3.** Then apply an effective disinfectant e.g. Kenocox. Kenocox is effective against cryptosporidium and coccidia, adhere to the safety guidelines.
- 4.** Use the dilution rate and contact time to be effective against both cryptosporidium and coccidia. You need a dilution rate of 4% (1:25) and a contact time of two hours. Apply the formula with a foaming lance and apply 0.4 l of solution per meter square. Let the product dry.
- 5.** A final rinse with water and allow to dry. This last point is critical to the control and prevention of cryptosporidium as desiccation or drying is important in inactivating the *C. parvum* oocysts. Opening the doors and taking out the gates and exposing them to air and sunlight is key to drying out the house.
- 6.** Once dry the houses and pens should be left empty of livestock for at least 3 months.

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Vaccinations



KEY POINT: If you are on **an IBR vaccination programme**, July is the month to review it.

The two main vaccines on the market are Rispoval IBR and Bovilis IBR both are marker vaccines, this allows us to differentiate between vaccinated and unvaccinated cattle and both have live and inactivated vaccines.

There are two programmes, either every 6 months with a live vaccine or an annual inactivated vaccine. Discuss with your vet the most appropriate for your farm.

Every 6 months live

This vaccine is suitable for herds with a high level of IBR in the herd, herds expanding or purchasing stock, large herds and contract rearing herds etc.

In this programme a live vaccination is administered every 6 months to all the animals on the farm intra muscular and for calves under three months of age administer the vaccine intra nasal. The ideal timing of this programme for spring calving dairy herds is January and July.

The reason for this is that the January vaccine is given a month just before calving, to give the maximum amount of antibody cover at the time when IBR is likely to be shedding the most and causing the most problems. It will boost the antibody in the cow herself and in the colostrum for the calf. Around calving is when cows are under the most stress, their immune system is compromised and are most likely to be shedding IBR, also at this time we have two vulnerable groups on the farm the young calves just born and the first calved heifers having just joined the herd.

If you are on this programme vaccinate all your animals this month –July.

Annual Inactivated

This vaccine is suitable for herds with a low level of IBR in the herd and herds that their only purchase is a stock bull tested negative and vaccinated.

In this programme an inactivated vaccine is administered annually once the animals have received a live vaccine within 6 months of the first annual inactivated vaccine. The ideal timing of the annual vaccine is January as explained above.

Each animal needs to initially receive a live vaccine within 6 months of the January inactivated vaccine. If you are already on this programme your young stock need to receive their live vaccine from now on.

You can get to know and monitor your IBR status with the Munster bulk milk screening. There are two different tests, if you are not vaccinating we do the gB test and if you are vaccinating we do the gE test.



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SUSTAINABLE USE OF ANTHELMINTHIC'S

1. We need to control lungworm and stomach worms to avoid animals having growth and production setbacks.
2. We also need to develop immunity in the young animals for later life.
3. We need to avoid over reliance on antehelminthics and use grazing management practices and rotating different age groups in conjunction with antehelminthics to control the parasites.



KEY POINT: Calves are 1st season grazers and have no immunity to either lungworm or stomach worms. The bulling heifers are 2nd season grazers and have some immunity. The cows are 3rd season grazers + and should have developed immunity by correct practices being adapted in the 1st and 2nd season grazing.

We have 3 families of anthelmintic's

1. **Benzimidazoles:** White drenches (Albex, Valbazen, Repridose bolus etc.)
2. **Levamisoles:** Yellow drenches or pour-ons (Levacide, Levafas diamond)
3. **Macrocytic lactones:** Clear pour-ons/injections (Ivomec, dectomax, Eprinex, Mastermectin etc.)

We need to do out a plan for each group of animals. Now is a suitable time to talk to your vet to discuss your circumstances and formulate a plan for the season.

CALVES

Need a dose within 3 weeks of going out as they are usually in infected calf paddocks initially. Then we need to try and graze them in clean, safe pastures. Grass after a cut of silage being taken is clean pasture so we can extend the period between doses and wait for the calves to develop a cough prior to the next dose in order to develop immunity. Equally grazing the calves after the bulling heifers helps to clean the pastures, as bulling



CALVES

heifers are low risk and have developed some immunity since their 1st grazing season. Calves in a good nutritional plane and in good body condition will develop immunity easy and are less likely to succumb to parasites.

Best dosing practice:

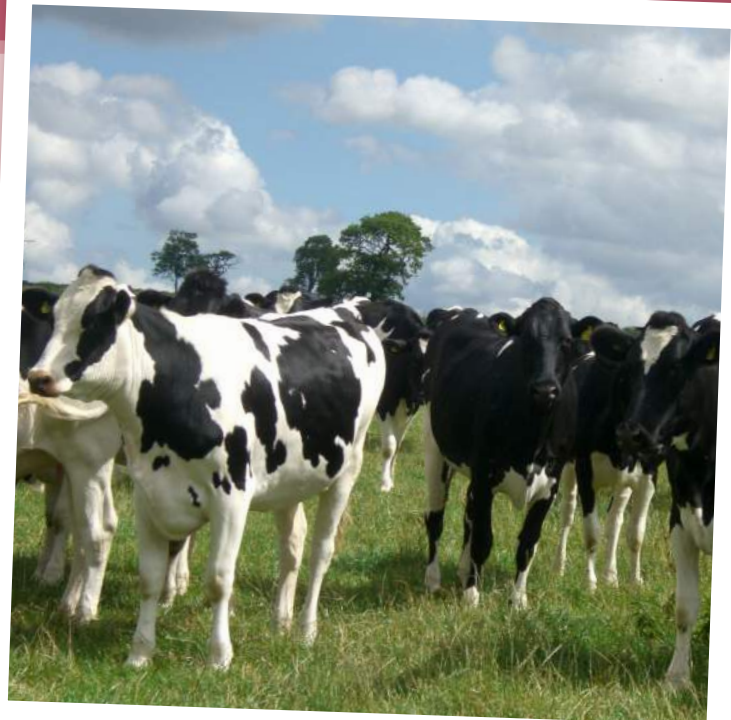
- 1.** Rotate the dosing products between the 3 different families avoid over reliance on one family.
- 2.** Extend the period between the doses. Avoid dosing every time they are in the yard!
- 3.** Administer the correct dose for the correct weight. Under dosing can lead to resistance.
Avoid dosing calves in feed this leads to under dosing.
- 4.** Let calves remain in the old pasture for 3 days after dosing prior to being moved to clean pastures.
- 5.** Monitor dung samples for egg counts with your vet.

BULLING HEIFERS

One dose during the grazing season should be sufficient for this group.

Dose now at the end of June or early July.

If you used the Macrocyclic lactones last year, use a white or yellow drench this year.



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BULLING HEIFERS

If you are in a heavily infected Liver Fluke area consider a Liver Fluke dose now as well. The bulk milk sample last Autumn is a good indication of the level of infection on the farm or else factory reports if you slaughter cattle. Either a Triclabendazole-Fasinex/Endofluke/Tribex or if they are 6 months from calving you can use Trodax, both are extremely useful. Adhere to withdrawal times carefully.



COWS

Cows should have their immunity developed. However, 1st calvers may not have their immunity fully developed. They may benefit from a dose at this time, also any thin 2nd calvers. Ensure it is zero withdrawal. In addition to the pourons there is now an injectable available Eprices, there is some evidence available to suggest that the injectable is superior to pourons especially for lungworm. Avoid under dosing. Avoid dosing the whole herd as this will increase resistance long term as well as costing money.

