

DairyNZ Seasonal Diary

Calving until mating check list

Pasture and supplements

Calving to balance date

Deal with feed deficits

- The bigger the deficit the slower the rotation however this must be achieved without pasture damage
- If cows have to be held tight, do so early at the start of calving to minimise the impact
- Base supplement use on grazing residuals, how long the feed deficit will last as well as the price you are able to secure the supplement.

Maximise pasture grown

- Apply N at 30-50 kg N/ha
- Aim for no pugging damage.

Control of grazing residuals

- Target ryegrass/clover pastures – 7 clicks (1500 kg DM/ha) for milkers and colostrum cows
- Be objective – use the platometer and monitor pasture cover weekly.

Utilising supplements

- Stop supplement use in anticipation residuals increasing (use the feed wedge)
- Do not feed supplement when residuals are above 7 clicks
- Minimise wastage and pasture damage when feeding out.

Balance date to summer

Maintaining pasture quality

- Keep residuals 7 -8 clicks (1500 -1650 kg DM/ha)
- Monitor pasture cover weekly. Use the feed wedge and target pasture cover line to predict when to leave paddocks out for silage
- Target time to harvest from last grazing 35 – 40 days
- Refer to Farmfact 1-37 and 1-38 for more information.

Pre-mating practices

- Aim for condition scores of 4.0 or better for at least 85% of the herd by planned start of mating (PSM)
- Aim for 85% or more of the herd cycling before PSM
- OAD milking for cows with BCS less than 4.0 is an option.

Reproduction

- See Reproduction section.

Set up for the summer

- Develop a summer management plan that has dates as to when decisions are to be made e.g. culls; OAD; supplement use for winter; rotation length; nitrogen going into summer.

Environment

- If you are cultivating paddocks ensure you allow a five metre buffer between the paddock and any waterways
- Ensure effluent system is operating effectively
- Regularly check application rate and depth
- Make system maintenance a priority
- If you are emptying your effluent pond, apply the effluent to your crop paddocks to increase yield
- Site any silage stacks away from waterways
- Ensure that no silage leachate contaminates surface or ground water
- If you have done a Farm Enviro Walk, what actions have you taken to address the issues and opportunities identified?

Visit www.dairynz.co.nz/farmenvirowalk to learn more.

Calves

Bobby calves

Check the Best Practice Guidelines for Bobby Calves and Humane Destruction Guidelines. Available to order on www.dairynz.co.nz/publicationsandtools

Ensure calves are fit for transport:

- At least four days old
- Fed not more than two hours before transport
- Healthy, with no visible disease (e.g. scours), deformity, injury, blindness or disability
- Bright eyes and ears are upright
- Able to rise from a lying position, move freely and bear weight on all four limbs
- Has firm, worn hooves and a dry, withered navel.

Weaning calves

To set a dairy cow up for a long productive life you must give her the best possible start.

To wean calves successfully on to pasture:

- Wean at target weights (depends on rearing system used)
- Keep feeding meal once calves are on pasture (2 kg/head of meal daily, reducing over the next few months)
- Check weights after a few weeks
- Undertake FE counts to monitor parasite levels
- Vaccinate.

For more information on calf rearing, including target weights, see the Dairy Exporter Great Farming Guide on Calf Rearing, the DairyNZ Spring Survival Guide or DairyNZ FarmFact 3-20.

Reproduction

The majority of herds are already performing below (many well below!) industry targets, and this has nothing to do with payout or cash flow. Don't panic – focus on the job at hand and keep it simple.

- Target an acceptable 6-week in-calf rate and empty rate. Measure your current level of performance, plan future goals and likely strategies for achieving these goals. Prioritise or postpone the actions until you can afford them. InCalf can take you through the process
- Consider use of OAD for young stock (two and three year olds); especially if feed supply is limiting or cows are low in BCS. Predict and take action early; at least three weeks before mating, but right from calving for best results
- Increase time and diligence with the heat detection task. Train staff and work alongside them to demonstrate good heat detection
- Yearling mating at a minimum liveweight of 60% mature liveweight. Use easy-calving sires. Visit yearlings grazed-off prior to mating. Check mineral levels (Cu and Se)
- Focus on good bull management (for more see page 125 of the InCalf book)
- Keep a minimum of two bulls running with the herd at all times. One bull per 30 cows i.e 1/15 on the farm to rest bulls (page 129 of the InCalf book).

Mastitis prevention

Minimise the impact of early lactation mastitis. Removing calves from cows within the first 10-12 hours has been shown to reduce mastitis.

Calving period

- Check cows for mastitis at every milking whilst in the colostrum mob
- Treat and record all clinical cases
- Teat spray all lactating cows after every milking
- Ensure all cows are milked out completely before leaving the colostrum group.

Lactation period

- Use teat spraying to reduce the numbers of bacteria at the teat end and maintain good teat condition
- Monitor the milking machine and correct all faults
- Monitor the bulk milk somatic cell count for fluctuations. Spikes in bulk milk somatic cell count are an indication of new clinicals in the milking herd
- Strip herd at least once a week to check for new clinicals.

People

September

- Make sure your team get some time off to refresh after calving
- Hold a debrief with the team - how could calving go more smoothly next time and what went well?
- Prepare the team for the mating period
 - Go through the mating programme with them so they understand what will be happening
 - Set systems in place to make sure it runs smoothly
 - Check training requirements
 - Spend some time in the paddock with them to make sure they are accurately IDing bulling cows.

October

- Make sure maintenance is done before cropping and silage season to avoid break downs. Train your team for their roles during this busy period
- Conduct individual performance reviews with staff
- Plan to cover time off for your team around Labour Day
- Agriculture ITO courses are restarting after calving:
 - Check with your staff how they are going with their course and how they can practice what they are learning on the farm
 - Enrol your staff in a new course if a training need is identified. There are new courses starting throughout the year.

November

- Plan the roster for time off over Christmas with staff. Book in relief staff
- Plan career objectives with the team:
 - What are their aspirations?
 - What do they need to do to take the next step in their career?
 - How can you help them achieve their goals within your farm and gain benefits from keeping someone who knows what they are doing on your farm?
 - Look out for the DairyNZ Career Pathway tool due out November
- Discuss intentions with sharemilkers.

Don't forget

Tight Management

For advice, tools or event information visit the Tight Management pages on the DairyNZ website: www.dairynz.co.nz/tightmanagement

Events

- DairyNZ Directors Elections, voting closes at noon, 21 October 2009
- DairyNZ AGM 22 October 2009, Palmerston North

DairyNZ groups and events

- For more events and information visit: www.dairynz.co.nz/events
- Order DairyNZ publications and tools at: www.dairynz.co.nz/publicationsandtools