Culling - Selecting your future herd (2-2)

Having a high number of quality replacement stock gives a greater opportunity to improve herd quality through culling.

*In deciding which cows to cull, many different factors need to be considered.*

Empty cows
A cow which is empty will not produce next season - an obvious cull.

Temperament/conformation
Cows with bad temperament or poor conformation need to be considered in conjunction with the Production Worth (PW). You, as the milker, will know how poor the temperament or conformation of this cow is, but you may be prepared to put up with these faults in the cow if she has a high PW.

Calving date
Cows due to calve after the desired calving late in the calving period are candidates for culling – in later years these cows are more likely to remain as late calvers or not get in calf at all.

Health
There are many factors that should be included in the health category when considering cows for culling. The major one is mastitis: cows which regularly get mastitis are usually culled, irrespective of their productive capacity.

Other common health factors include feet trouble and calving difficulty.

Age
It is important to consider the PW of an older cow when making culling decisions. The age at which a cow becomes too old depends on your own personal preferences and has much to do with the stocking rate and geographical nature of your farm. You will know from past experience how well an 8 or 9 year old cow performs on your farm.

Production worth
After the cows which will be culled on the basis of being empty, having unsatisfactory temperament or poor conformation, having an unacceptable expected calving date, having a health problem, or being old, the next set of animals to consider culling are those with the lowest PW.

The PW indicates the lifetime ability of a cow to convert feed into profit.
The PW – Showing a cow’s productive ability

There are many pieces of information about your individual cows, such as temperament, which are known only to you. But there is also much information about your cows stored in the LIC database.

The PW shown on your herd test reports reflects this information and gauges the lifetime ability of each of your cows to convert feed into profit.

The PW goes a long way to helping you decide which cows to cull.