

Topic of the Month

Handy Metrics

We are always looking for better ways to benchmark our dairy herds. For many years, we looked at calving intervals. The problem there was that it looked backwards, evaluating what you were doing before more than what you are doing now.

More recently, we've looked at pregnancy rate. This metric includes both heat detection (HD) and conception rate (CR), the pillars of reproduction. This is still a good metric, but lately, I've gotten on to a better one.

I've started looking at Percent pregnant by 150 days in milk. This allows us to still evaluate HD and CR while focusing on the group of cattle that are most important to get pregnant—those relatively early in lactation. This is key to maximizing production and keeping a herd from getting stale.

Specifically this metric really combines looking at days at first service, first service conception rate, first-second service interval, and second service conception rate. The goal should be 65% with the best herds reaching levels of 70-75%.

When the percent pregnant by 150 DIM falls below the goal threshold, we can begin to dig down and try to determine if there is a transition issue, if cows are being bred too early, if we are missing heats, or if there is another problem.

Commodity Futures Prices

As of December 31, 2021

Corn	\$5.93/bu
Soybean Meal	\$411.70/ton
Milk (Class III)	\$18.42/cwt
Beef (Live cattle)	\$138.90/cwt

Practice News

- Congratulations to our vet assistant, Ashley Kaufman and her husband, Justin. They welcomed a baby boy, Rhett Jireh, on December 10.
- Our practice maintains a selection of equipment such as stomach pumps, hip lifts, a large castration bander, and gas dehorner for daily rental. Call the office to check availability.

New Products

- **Draxxin KP** is a newly released version of Draxxin, which also includes ketoprofen, a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug. Recognizing that bovine pneumonia is both inflammatory and infectious, this drug is along the same rational as Resflor Gold (Nuflor plus banamine), treating bovine respiratory disease in a single dose.
- **Bovikalc Dry** is a product that uses two boluses containing both calcium and anionic salts to decrease milk production at dry off. This is offered as a way to dry off heavy milking cows comfortably without having to withhold water.

Mark Your Calendar

- Registration is now open for the 2022 Pennsylvania Dairy Summit to be held February 2-3, 2022 in Lancaster. Keynote speakers have been announced and include Elle Purrier St. Pierre, a dairy farmer turned Olympian; Dr. Marin Bozic, discussing FMMO reform; Dale and Clay Hemminger discussing managing a family business with multiple enterprises including their dairy; and Ed Herr, Chairman and CEO of Herr Foods Incorporated, discussing his strategy and vision as he cultivates the culture and drives the growth of his business. You can register at padairysummit.org.