

Topic of the Month

Conception Rate

Last month, we talked about pregnancy rate, which is the product of heat detection and conception rate. Both of those numbers can be calculated or tracked from PCDart. Obviously if you breed 10 cows and get 5 pregnancies, your CR is 50%. The easiest way to determine this number from PCDart is to look at services per pregnancy.

Services per pregnancy is just what it sounds like and CR is calculated as the inverse of this number. For example, if the services per pregnancy is 2.0, the CR is 1 pregnancy per 2 services, or 50%. In the program, services per pregnancy is given for pregnant cows and for all cows. Acceptable values for these would be less than 2.5 for pregnant cows ($1/2.5 = 40\%$ CR) and less than 3.5 for all cows ($1/3.5 \sim 28.5\%$ CR - this is lower because it will include problem breeders and repro culls).

Of course, this is a guideline. For example, if you are breeding heifers, first service conception should be around 70%, or 60-65% using sexed semen. Lower CR would point to a serious problem.

Conception rate problems can be difficult to work up. We start collecting information about any irregular cycling, infectious disease, vaccination, and so on to try to determine if there is early embryonic death, poor conception, or something else going on. The good news is that heat detection problems are far more common- and far easier to fix.

Commodity Futures Prices

As of June 30, 2018

Corn (July)	\$3.50/bu
Soybean Meal (July)	\$332.80/ton
Milk (Class III-July)	\$15.27/cwt
Beef (Live cattle-June)	\$107.00/cwt

Practice News

- Due to scheduling availability, the Beef Quality Assurance seminar mentioned in last month's newsletter has been postponed until later in the summer. Stay tuned for updated information. This meeting is not just for beef producers. Dairy farmers can also benefit from this training. Residue avoidance is crucial in every area of agriculture.
- Penicillin and Polyflex are no longer entirely on backorder, however, they are available only on a very limited basis.

In The News

- According to a recent article in *Progressive Dairyman*, new research is being directed at using gene editing to create future AI sires that are homozygous polled. This introduction would increase polled genetics in such a way that would preserve the rate of genetic gain without increasing inbreeding, which simulation studies have identified as likely to occur using existing polled genetics.
- Aaron Boone, manager of the New York Yankees baseball team, has recorded a public service announcement that will play at the stadium before every home game. In the clip, he asks, "What do baseball and chocolate milk have in common?". Then he answers, saying, "It's the number nine – it takes nine innings to win a game, and there's nine essential nutrients in lowfat chocolate milk."

Upcoming Events

- The Somerset County 4H Dairy Show will be held Friday, July 6.
- The Somerset County Black and White Show will be held Saturday, July 7.