

## **Breeding season**

The breeding season will soon be past its peak for 2014 for many of the spring calving herds in the Lakeland region. The primary focus has been on achieving a high submission rate over the 1<sup>st</sup> three weeks of the breeding season. This is the main driver in order to increase the percentage your herd calving early into the calving season in 2015.

Many farmers to date have been artificial inseminating cows for 7 – 8 weeks at this stage, some will now choose to introduce an easy calving beef sire to the herd in order to inseminate the remainder of the herd, this approach is adequate provided that you will have enough replacements born to high EBI stock and full fill your replacement rate.

However attention is now needed in order to keep the number of April and May Calving cows to minimum. This will be helped by ensuring that all non-pregnant cows are bred as soon as possible.

Check records to identify any cows that have not yet been seen to cycle and take corrective action.

From speaking to farmers this year some reported a “lull period” six weeks into the calving season of 2014, this seemed to last for a couple of weeks and the numbers of cows calving seemed to drop off before picking up again, with late calving cows in the herd. A minor drop back after the 6 – 7 weeks into the calving season is likely but heat detection during June can be more relaxed as a can be the main reason for some producers experiencing a quiet period around the end of March. It certainly pays in order to give herd fertility your utmost attention as it is strongly linked with overall profitability.

**Remember: a cow AI / served on your farm today will not be calving until 25<sup>th</sup> March 2015.**

**How many cows would you like to have calving after this date next year?**

**We received many enquires about our Sustainable Dairying Calculator as advertised in last month’s newsletter, and have visited many farms as a result we want to continue to use this tool with suppliers so please contact us if you would like to further enhance the efficiency of your farm business”**

**We are also planning a summer tour for Lakelands suppliers but will have more information on this in next month’s bulletin.**

**For further information & advice on any of the topics discussed contact any of the joint programme advisors**

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### **Milk Proteins and grass quality**

Milk protein tends to dip during early June for spring calving herds, (7 – 8 weeks post calving). Cow genetics (EBI) and calving date important longer term factors affecting milk protein. However pasture quality is the main issue over the next number of weeks. Farm in the region are actively growing up to 70 Kg/DM/day currently.

As grass growth tends to exceed demand on many farms the likely outcome of this grass covers getting too strong. Increasing amounts of stemmy material in the diet will reduce digestibility, intake and milk protein. Quality is best controlled by keeping the pre grazing cover to around 1400- 1500 kg/DM/Ha. This allows the cows to graze a high energy feed source accompanied by a small amount of high energy concentrates. Many farmers have baled out surplus grass on paddocks to date and this is the most effective way of keeping on top of grass quality, these bales provide a valuable source later in the year as a high energy feed source and in turn the benefit of getting heavy covers cleaned of will guarantee a very lush grass in 18 days post cutting. Every farmer should be making bales at every available opportunity and the benefits are outweigh the cost in terms of increased grass quality and the majority of bales will likely be 72% + in DMD.

### **Example**

If you are stocked at 1.9 cows / ha you will have a demand of 30kg/Dm/ day, so if your farm is growing in excess of this you most defiantly will have a surplus looming on your grazing block, at average growth rates are 60kg + per day. The best way to identify this is do a weekly grass walk, this hour spent is invaluable as described by many producers who will openly tell you it's the most important job to be done a Monday morning after milking.

**If you would like any help in relation to budgeting / measuring grass please contact any of the Joint programme team and we will gladly assist as we are well aware of the energy source that lies within grass when it is managed correctly.**

**HAVE YOU REPLACEMENT HEIFERS WITH AN EBI  
€150+ THAT YOU ARE WILLING TO SELL?**

**Wanted!!!!**

**Lakeland Dairies have a number of new  
entrants interested in sourcing high EBI  
heifers to begin milk production.**

**If you feel you have what they are looking for please contact  
Members Relations on 1890 474720 or Adrian on  
(087)4138584**