

BENEFITS FROM FOCUSING ON FERTILITY - CASE STUDY

Paul Roderick

Paul, David and Gwen Roderick farm at Harrisville Qld. The herd has a rolling average of 280 cows, with an average production of 27 litres per cow per day. Their system is classed as a partial mixed ration system.

In regard to improving herd fertility, there are a number of key practices they follow:

+ Heifers have an entry liveweight of around 90% of mature cows

- Rodericks have a target heifer entry weight into their herd of 550 kg.
- Heifers receive energy and protein supplements throughout rearing.

+ Herd body condition

- Rodericks monitor body condition scores during late lactation through to mating.
- Key targets are cows at score of 5 at drying off and calving, and no less than 4 at mating.



+ Focus on transition feeding

- Rodericks feed a transition cow diet to all springing cows and heifers from at least three weeks pre calving.
- The diet is based on a balance of grain, silage and long fibre. A customised mineral supplement is also fed.
- A key aspect of their transition cow management is simplicity, such as using predetermined volumes of additives in their mix and spreading this over the top of feed.

+ Post calving uterine checks

- All cows receive a post calving uterine health check using a Metrichick to detect any endometritis. This is carried out 30 to 37 days post-calving.

+ Heat detection

- As with many Australian farmers, Rodericks fit mounting heat detection devices (kamars) weekly.
- These are fitted at 60 days post calving and 10 – 17 days post insemination.



+ AI technique

- Anyone who inseminates has undertaken AI training
- Submission rates are carefully monitored (as discussed below) to detect any problems with their AI technique.



+ Use of software to record herd data and predict cow heat and mating events

- There are a number of herd reproductive software programmes available in Australia.
- Rodericks use DairyPlan 21.
- The main uses for this software are predicting cycles, returns, expected calving dates, uterine checks and when to fit kamars.

