

**Dr. Marc Levesque, Dr. Steve Dorais, Dr. Lucie Décoeur**

**How's My Repro Going???**

With the computer systems today, our vet lists are printed out and then we go through the motions of getting the ultra-sounds done to see how many are pregnant. We then are happy if most of the ones we actually check are found to be pregnant. This is a very crude picture of the state of reproduction in a herd. There is so much information in that computer that never gets looked at or used to help find opportunities to improve herd performance and efficiency. We will look at a few numbers in a very simplified and straightforward way to see what is working in a herd and what is not. Often, a few simple changes can put more milk in your tank!

**First service conception rate:** When this number is above 40 percent, you are probably pretty happy with your repro and your average days in milk should not be above 180 very often. First service for heifers should not happen before 85 days and around 75 days for cows. Heifers that conceive before that don't do as well on their second lactation. For cows, breedings below 75 days have greatly reduced conception rates. They will also not complete their 305 days of lactation and be penalized in their BCA averages, for those who prioritize this. Targets are 60 % conception for heifers and 45 % for mature cows. There are strategies with synchronization to optimize these numbers, and decisions are herd specific.

**Pregnancy rate:** This is the real money maker for herds. This tells you how many cows are actually pregnant out of the ones that are supposed to be getting pregnant by 3-week period, which represents a heat cycle. All eligible cows are supposed to show a heat every 3 weeks, and this is why that interval is used.

Pregnancy rate =	% cows bred	multiplied by	conception rate
24% =	60%	x	40%

Almost all dairy producers understand how to maximize their pregnancy rate, whether they are aware of it or not. Many of them now get biweekly herd checks because this improves the first number (% cows bred) since the quicker you find the open ones, the quicker they are bred back. This is by far the easier number to increase. They also work on the second number by using different synchronization protocols to try to increase conception rates. It is obvious that overall herd health has a huge influence on conception rate, but that would be a 500-page newsletter!

**Breeding codes:** Using codes that identify each breeding by type classifies them as natural heats, ovsync, prostaglandins (bioestrovet) injections, G6G, double ovsync, cidr, sexed semen or embryo transfer. Each herd seems to have some variations in success. Surprisingly, multiple herds will show their lowest conception rates on natural breedings. Others will have the lowest conception rates with the protocol they use only in problem cows, but expectations are different for problem cows. The point is that the information can be useful and is very easy to gather because when breedings are entered in your system, you usually know what type of breeding it is.

In conclusion, there is a lot of data available to help fine tune (or overhaul!!) Repro programs in herds. We all know that it is ultimately a huge factor on profitability on dairy farms.

***Breaking news! We are in the process of setting up a mobile veterinary technician service to better serve YOU!***

**Embryo Transfer Services**

613-795-9947

Dr. Luc Besner  
 Neil Moorhouse, ATT

**Nation Veterinary Hospital**

613-764-1234

**Embrun Veterinary Hospital**

613-443-5459