

Break the Cycle to Let them Cycle

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Dairy Farmers

In the beginning

We were young, green and keen and wanted to listen to everyone. We had purchased a herd with a huge calving spread with some cows due to calve after the start of mating. We induce early, but still had 50% non-cyclers at the start of mating.

We were becoming the vet's retirement fund! Inducing and CIDRs were not working for us. The empty rate didn't seem to be changing. The same cows were being induced or CIDRed, or both, every year. The calving spread was slowly improving, but at what cost? The empty rate had peaked at 23%. This was not a good advert for dairying.

The time had come to do things very differently:

- no CIDRs or inductions
- do not tail paint pre-mating (you do not need to see the non-cyclers)
- AB for only three weeks. Get the bulls out there early, they are the best head detectors
- we were "thinking outSIDE the square."

The vet was putting CIDRs into some dirty cows and telling me, "That's OK, this will work". Instead of inducing and CIDRing to fix the problem, we looked to see what was causing the problems.

- We started a mineral program
- Liver and blood testing
- Improved cow condition
- Give them time, as there is a lot happening in the spring
- Most will cycle in time to see the bull.

I believe most cows will calve within 14 days of their birthdays, so by using AB for only three weeks you will get all of your replacements in five weeks, and now you will have started to breed that high fertility herd that we all want. At the time we were building up numbers for another herd, so we never had enough heifers born. We could see the light at the end of the tunnel.

- Start to carry over young MT cows
- Less non-cycling cows
- MT rate starts coming down as low as 5%
- There are some cows you are better off without, the repeaters
- Keep on culling

- You do not have to do all of this at once
- AB for three weeks, this is the first and easiest step
- You don't have to go through this alone.

Something to think about. How many of you induce that cow and when she does not cycle you give her that CIDR and if she has a heifer calf you rear it? We need to break that cycle.