"Dry Cow Management"

...the foundation for success

Effective management of the dairy cow during the dry period is essential, since decisions made during this period will have a large effect on milk production and animal health during the subsequent lactation.

Late Lactation

Monitor BCS 100days pre drying off.

Cows should enter the dry period in BCS 3.0. Feeding in late lactation should be carefully monitored so as to ensure this. Lactating cows utilise energy 25% more efficiently than dry cows. Therefore changes in BCS should be made during late lactation.

- Overfat cows are prone to ketosis & fatty liver syndrome
- Under conditioned cows have lower production potential and poorer fertility.

Far Off Dry Period (4-8wks pre calving)

Maintain BCS 3.0

The far off dry period can be used to slightly alter BCS, but should not be relied upon to make major changes. Rather cows should enter this period in the correct condition, and be maintained.

Diet

Fibrous diets should be fed during this period to maximise rumen capacity. Changes to BCS should be made by changing the quality of the diet rather than restricting quantity.

Thin cows can be fed extra concentrates to increase BCS

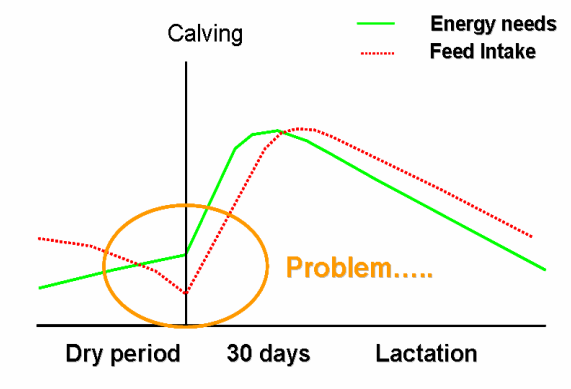
Fat cows should be fed a lower quality diet

Recuperation

The far off period is an ideal opportunity to carry out some routine maintenance. This may include taking time to trim and set up cow's foot angle for next lactation. Dosing of cows against fluke and worms is a good practice, to avoid milk withdrawals.

Close Up Dry Period (0-4wks pre calving)

Ensure Cow is in Positive Energy Balance



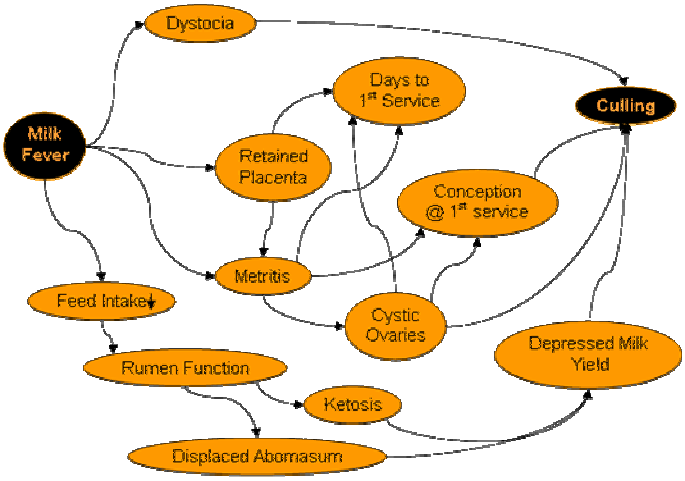
Feed intake cannot possible supply energy requirements in early lactation. Hence the cow enters negative energy balance, loosing body condition. The introduction of concentrate feeding during the close up dry period is essential. By doing so, the rumen becomes adapted to starch based rations again. Also, the energy density of the dry cow diet is increased, and so cows approach calving in positive energy balance. Regardless of BCS, cows should always calve down in positive energy balance.

Prime Cow For New Lactation

By feeding the UF Pre Calver range, the high levels of starch stimulate the rumen papillae to redevelop after a period of reduction, preparing the cow for high starch based diets in early lactation. Not only does the cow enter lactation in positive energy balance, but she continues to have high intakes in early lactation, with obvious conception benefits.

Preventing Milk Fever

Milk fever is a costly condition with detrimental effects throughout the subsequent lactation.



All of these conditions can be controlled by proper management during the dry period. The UF Pre Calver Range contains the exact levels of calcium, phosphorus and potassium required by the dairy cow. Magnesium and selenium are also included along with a supply of major vitamins.

Fertility

Although not commonly associated, poor dry cow management affects fertility. It takes 2-3 months for an egg to develop in the ovary. Therefore the egg for the subsequent calf is actually being produced during the dry period. Poor management during this time or stress on the cow effects the development of the egg. Consequently, the cow may exhibit poor signs of heat, develop cysts and have poor conception rates.

Management Post Calving

The Fresh Calved Cow

Similarly in early lactation, it is essential that intakes are maximised. Minimising body condition loss should be a primary aim during the first few weeks of lactation. This can be helped by ensuring that fresh food is available at all times and that there is sufficient trough space for all animals to feed. The rumen can be kept healthy by ensuring that good quantities of long fibre are included in the ration and that concentrates are not overfed.