



FranklinVets UPDate

SEPTEMBER 2025

A blueprint to build!

It is well accepted that farmers define what it is to be a “jack of all trades”. Being well versed in finance, HR, animal health, agronomy, building, fencing and contracting doesn’t leave much room for new development of new skills. So, we figured rather than ask you to play architect as well that

Mating is just around the corner so take a moment to read our latest update on everything you need to know for the season ahead.

we would just give you the blueprint!!

The REPRO HOUSE (see next page) is a difficult one to build however – a lot of materials, moving parts and planning is required. As with any house a strong foundation is paramount. Make sure to free up an hour in your busy Winter schedules to review recent repro performance, identify weak points and strategise solutions. We understand there is always a plethora of smaller jobs competing for your attention but consider the value of that hour to the financial performance of your business – HINT >> returns will be in the \$1000’s rather than \$10’s!

At the top of the house is where it all starts and ends, Calving Pattern. A tighter calving pattern will not only provide you more days in milk but also reduces the risks associated with mating with cows having longer to cycle and conceive. I.e. the tighter the calving pattern the more reliable and successful mating will be – it is a self-fulfilling prophecy.

There are four rooms to the REPRO HOUSE that combine to support calving pattern. Heifer (R2) Mating Performance, Management of Late Calvers, Herd Conception Rate and Submission Rate. Spend some time looking



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over the blueprint attached considering how you can “decorate” these rooms to your liking to build your dream (repro) home.

Keep in mind that the biggest predictor of this year’s mating performance is last year’s mating performance. If you’re wanting to see improvements to empty rate or calving pattern, create some change!

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TREVOR BRUNTON

Repro House Farmer Concept

Calving Pattern

Biggest predictor of this years' mating performance is last years' mating performance
To improve, something needs to change!

Heifers <i>Take 10 days longer to cycle than MA cows</i>	Late Calvers <i>Empty rate of late calvers (calving >6 weeks) lies between 25-35%</i>	Conception Rate <i>Target 55-60%</i>	Submission Rate <i>75% should be cycling 10 days out from mating</i>
Heifer Synchrony <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved programmes achieve reliable 60-70% conception rates Young Stock Health Plans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure heifers are achieving target weights Manage drench resistance development Bull Fertility Testing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 in 5 bulls is infertile or subfertile. Natural mating with small numbers of bulls a high risk if no testing performed 	Review Lates Post-Scanning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider value late calvers are adding to herd Short Gest. Semen <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Similar to running a shorter mating period without taking the hit on empty rate General support for Later Calvers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> OAD Don't forget to metricheck this group! Early non-cycler intervention Eprinex to help with recovery 	Metrichecking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Treated cows have 10% higher 6 week in-calf rate, 3% lower empty rate BCS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular BCS checks through Spring Feeding/nutrition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our vets have a wealth of knowledge and tools to review feeding and performance on farm Heat Check <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check heat detection accuracy by scanning ovaries of cows going up to AI 	Non-Cycler Programmes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used to lift submission rate quickly if not high enough Why Wait <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shifts cows expected to cycle in weeks 2 & 3 into week 1 by short cycling them 7 days earlier conception Teaser Bulls <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist heat detection where quiet/silent heats might be an issue
Mating Plans – the foundation of a successful mating <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Review previous mating records/results/FFR 2) Plan out what needs to happen to correct any shortfalls 3) Execute with farmer – keep in contact and regularly review how things are tracking 			

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Thinking of syncing?

There's growing interest among farmers this season in heifer synchrony, and for a range of good reasons. Some farms are aiming to get more replacement calves from high-BV heifers, others are looking to reduce bobby calves, and many are just wanting to bring calving forward to allow more time for heifers to start cycling again before their next mating, and at the same time, leading to more milk in the vat.

Recent advances in synchrony programs mean there's now a wider range of options to suit your goals. The newest protocol available is showing conception rates in the high 60s thanks to its design that more closely mimics the natural cycle. Whether you're aiming for fewer yardings, better conception rates, or planning to use sexed semen, there's a programme that can fit.

If you're thinking about investing in synchrony, it is important to ensure your heifers are well-prepared for success. Heifers should be well grown to liveweight targets, BVD clear and vaccinated, and up to date with minerals and other treatments.

If heifer synchrony is on your radar this season, now's a good time to talk with your vet to find the plan that best suits your needs and ensure your heifers are set up to perform.

Mating Checklist for Maiden Heifers

Make sure your heifers are ready to go before mating begins:

- **Liveweight targets met** – heifers weighed and on track; remove any undersized animals.
- **BVD** – screen complete and first and second vaccines administered.
- **Mineral treatments** – up to date with copper, selenium and B12.
- **Drenching** – use a combination drench if needed based on faecal egg count results.
- **Bull selection** – choose easy-calving, ideally Jersey bulls.
- **Bull ratio** – Minimum of 1 bull per 20 heifers.
- **Bull health** – ensure well-grown, BVD tested, and vaccinated for both BVD and IBR.



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Getting the most out of your collar data



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Spring herds

Mating is almost upon us. Two areas that should receive focus are whether cows are in positive energy balance as we head into mating, and whether they are cycling. Collar data provides valuable insights into both areas.

Simply put, positive energy balance means more high-value nutrients going into your cows over time. As we progress through the spring, the energy density of pastures tends to increase, and pasture becomes more available. Increases in dry matter intake will be seen as increases in eating minutes and rumination times. Increases in energy density may not be reflected in increased eating and rumination times but often manifest as increases in milk protein percentage and per-cow daily production. The combination of these effects means that collar data will show stable or increasing eating and rumination minutes over the mating period if positive energy balance is being maintained.

Don't forget to check the variation in these measures. Daily variation indicates inconsistency in feeding, which can prevent cows from peaking well and cycling well. Where a lot of variation occurs, cows may show up on health alerts without obvious signs of disease.

Most collar support software allows you to see which cows have had heat activity. You should be seeing cows with heats popping up on your systems now. Knowing which cows are active or silent helps to determine the most appropriate management options; natural mating, "Why wait" mating or non-cycler programme mating to optimise your herd's 6-week in-calf rate. You can also use this information to determine when cows should be mated for maximum conception rates.

Autumn herds

For most autumn herds, mating is complete, and we are now looking at the late lactation "cruise" until the end of the season.

Collar tech can help with mating even now. Cows that have no record of being mated

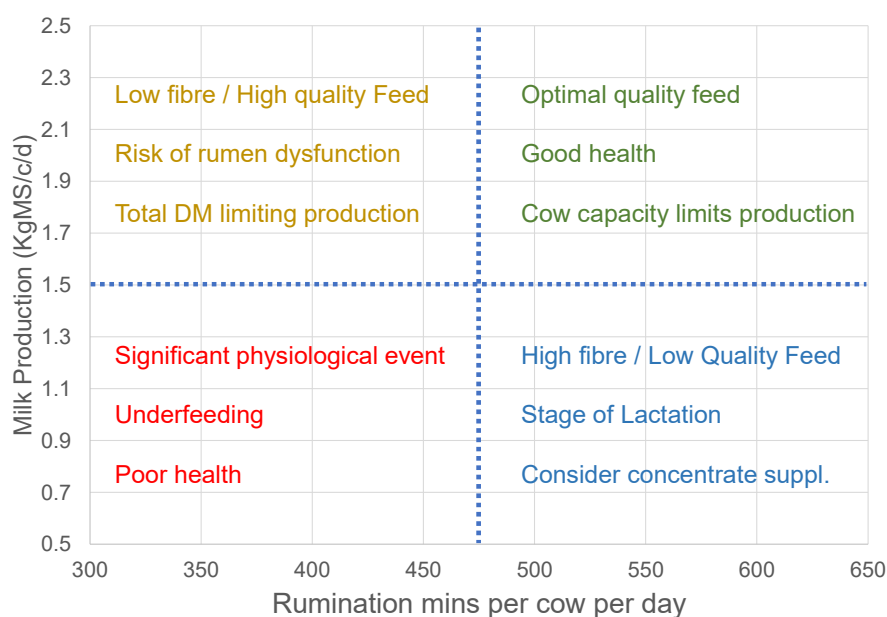
to AI and that have not been recorded with the collar data as being in heat during the bull mating period can be treated with synchrony programmes if you are still mating. This will significantly reduce the empty rate at the end of the mating period.

Rumination and eating minutes are as important in autumn cows now as they are in spring cows. However, where the focus in spring is to ensure positive energy balance through the peak and mating periods, the focus in autumn herds is to

ensure sustained milk production and BCS gain. Rumination minutes should remain at targets, 500 minutes for a 500 kg live weight cow, to ensure this. They should be understood in conjunction with milk production to determine how best to modify diets to achieve the desired outcomes.

Talk to your local veterinarian if you see patterns in eating, rumination, health alerts, or cycling activity that are not what you expect.

Rumination vs KgMS Quadrant Model



Scanning options

As we head towards mating, we are introducing a few new scanning services.

Heat check scan

A heat check scan is a great tool if you have relatively inexperienced staff performing heat detection or if you are not cracking the '5 stars' for heat detection on the Fertility Focus report and would like to improve. Collar data was used to determine the optimal mating window, and scanning data showed that cows with a follicle $\geq 15\text{mm}$ were very likely (sensitivity 93%) to be in this window.

The scan is best done early after the PSM. The farmer drafts the cows that have been put up for AB that day (ideally, around 20 animals are scanned). These cows can be assessed, and the vet will report back the number of cows in the ideal mating window.

If the report shows there is room for improvement, you have the opportunity very early in mating to look at the possible cause (tail paint too thick, kamars in the wrong place) to sort this out.

Non-return scan

A scan of non-cycling or early mated cows between 35-45 days after the planned start of mating. This allows either confirmation of pregnancy or of non-cycler status and allows for treatment of any non-cycler cows rather than finding these empty at scanning.

Repeat breeders scan

A scan of cows that keep cycling but not holding to check for pregnancy and for damage or disease. If they are not pregnant and the uterus and ovaries look normal, they can be treated as a non-cycler so that they can go up for a fixed time AI.

Late non-cyclers

A scan of the non-cyclers 10 days out from the end of mating to check for pregnancy, damage and disease. Non-cycling cows with no other issues can be treated using an Ovsynch program,



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giving them one more chance of getting pregnant. If 10 cows are treated 4-5 of them are likely to get pregnant.

If you have any questions about these services, please get in touch with your local clinic.

Gold standard heat detection

Use 2 heat detection aids:

1. Tail Paint

Preparation - Remove any loose hair or dirt from the tail area and ensure the skin is clean and dry.

Application - Use a brush or applicator to apply a strip of tail paint no more than 20cm long and 5-6cm wide and thick enough to cover the skin (but still allowing hair fibres to be visible).

Placement - Apply the paint strip along the spine, starting at the tail head and moving towards the cow's front. i.e. strokes should be back to front. **If the hair fibres are not visible it is too thick!**

Repainting - Reapply tail paint to cows after they've been in heat to track their cycling and touch up weekly



2. Heat Mount detector

Preparation - Prepare the area two days prior to application. Remove loose hair and dirt (these disturb the oils in the coat and prevent glue from sticking).

Application - Use glue or self-adhesive as recommended by the manufacturer

Placement - Pressure-activated heat mount detectors - The patch is mounted on the backbone with the top of the patch between the hip bones. Adjust for the size of cow and aim for position that will receive maximum pressure from the brisket of the mounting animal

Placement - Scratch-off patch heat mount detectors - The patches are mounted across the backbone, at the highest point closer to the tail



Use the tail paint and heat mount detector information along with the previously recorded heat or mating date to make a decision on whether to submit for AI or not



Watch this video

<https://www.dairynz.co.nz/animal/reproduction-and-mating/using-heat-detection-aids/>



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Bull mating management



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With mating just around the corner, now is the time to sort your bull teams. Ideally bulls should be on farm at least three weeks prior to going out with the herd. This allows them to work out their social hierarchy beforehand so they can focus on the cows once added to the herd instead of fighting each other.

Ensure that virgin bulls are used and that they come certified for being BVD free and vaccinated for Lepto and BVD. Ask specifically for documentation stating this. Veterinary examination of bulls is recommended before they start work. When performing fertility checks, it's not uncommon to find bulls that are not fit for service. Common reasons for a bull to be not fit for service include small testicles, penis deformities or poor sperm viability.

The number of bulls required will depend on how many cows are likely to come on heat while the bulls are with the group. Bulls should be used at a ratio of 1:30 for cows and 1:20 for R2 heifers. Use two teams of bulls so that one team is rotated every 1-2 days, reducing the risk of lameness and fatigue. As an example, a 300-cow herd with a 50% in-calf rate when the bulls go out will require five bulls per team and therefore, 10 bulls in total.

Bulls need to be checked regularly for lameness, illness or injury and replaced with new bulls if identified. Infections, antibiotic treatment, and elevated temperatures effect sperm production for 30+ days making them ineffective for use. Encourage bulls to stay in the paddock during milkings as reducing time on concrete yarding will also help lower lameness incidence.

Teaser bulls are a great way to improve heat detection on your farm. While their presence in the herd doesn't bring the cows on any better, they will ride the cows harder, making rub marks more obvious. We can vasectomise bulls at any age, this can even be done as young calves at debudding time to avoid another sedation.

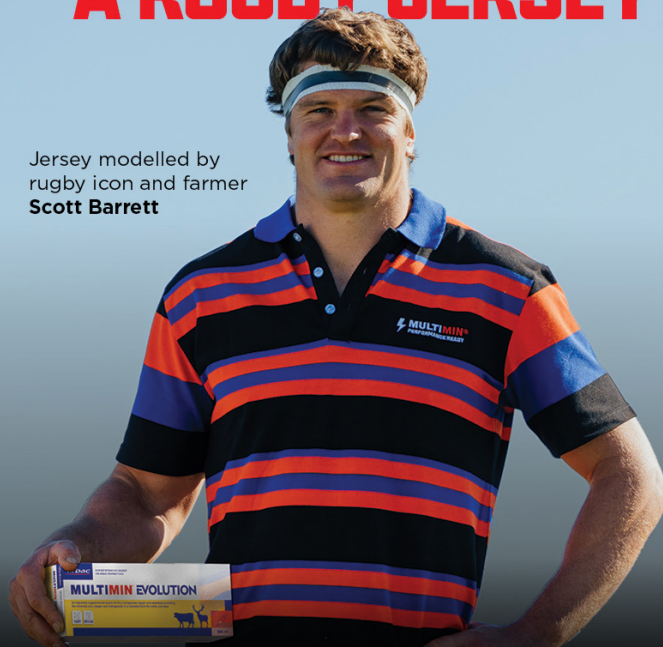
If you have any questions about getting the most out of your bulls this mating season, get in touch with your Franklin farm vet.



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