

# MAIDEN HEIFERS

## GOALS FOR MAIDEN HEIFERS

1

Aim to calve all the maiden heifers in the first 4 weeks, this gives them the best opportunity to achieve 5.5 lactations.

2

Easy calving critical for future production. Inseminate with an easy calving sire of high reliability.

3

Maximize the number of replacements from the maiden heifers as they are the highest genetic merit animals and it will allow you to maximize the overall calf value of the herd by using more beef sires on the mature cows.

4

Consider the maidens for sexed semen to rapidly improve the herd genetic merit.

## PRE-BREEDING

1. Ideally have the maiden heifers at grass 3-4 weeks pre breeding. This will ensure that they are on a stable diet at breeding and are gaining weight. Heifers can gain 1Kg/day at grass.
2. At breeding heifers need to be at 60% of their mature body weight. Heifers that are behind target need supplementary feeding. See table 3 for target weight by maintenance.
3. Ensure all vaccinations are received 3-4 weeks pre breeding.
4. In the last week pre breeding familiarize the heifers with the yard and crush by bringing them in daily and for encouragement feed them 1Kg per day of feed.
5. Watch the weather forecast for applying scratch cards as the heifers need to be bone dry.
6. Introduce the vasectomised bull to them and fit him with a chin ball, if he is a first season bull fit him with a chin ball without any paint in it for a week. It will be lighter on his head and he will be less likely to damage it.

Maintenance Index €	Mature weight kg	Target weight at breeding kg
-5	665	399
0	641	384
5	616	370
10	592	355
15	568	341
20	544	326
25	520	312
30	496	297

## BREEDING

1. Ensure heifers are on a rising plane of nutrition and are gaining weight. Avoid any reduction in intakes at this time, avoid keeping them in a bare paddock as it near the crush or housing them on silage. This will reduce heat activity and conception rates.
2. **HEIFERS UNDER TARGET WEIGHT by less than 15%** Breed these heifers in the 1st 3 weeks of the breeding season avoid delaying them by 3 weeks, as delaying by 3 weeks will result in March & April calvers and an early exit from the herd.

When grass quality begins to decrease in July start feeding these heifers to ensure that at housing, they are at target weight. Avoid delaying the supplementation of these heifers



## HEAT DETECTION

- › Avoid tail paint in heifers as they are too light to rub it off.
- › Ideally use two methods of heat detection as they can be difficult to pick up.
- › Crayons work well if heifers are indoors
- › Scratch cards are excellent outdoors.
- › Scratch cards and crayons together are excellent.
- › A vasectomised bull fitted with a chin ball combined with either scratch or crayons is best.

## SCANNING

This is an extremely worthwhile exercise in heifers. Scan the heifers 30 days after the majority have been served and place scratch cards on the empty heifers and watch them carefully for repeats.

## RECORDING A SCAN IN FARMOPS

FarmOps facilitates easy and accurate recording of pregnancy results. If the serves are recorded, the days in calf will be displayed which will increase the accuracy of your scanning results.