Long calving intervals cut dairy profits

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Are you milking more cows and enjoying it less? If you're typical of the average dairyman, the answer is probably YES. Some of this dissatisfaction can be traced back to the reproductive performance of your herd.

To illustrate my point, let's look at two cows. Both produce 16,000 pounds of milk per completed lactation. The only difference betwen them is that one calves on a 12 month interval while the other calves every 14 months.

Calculate their annual milk production, and you'll find that the first cow produces 16,000 pounds of milk in a yar, compared to only 13,741 pounds over the same period for the second one. That's a whopping 2,259 pounds of milk difference.

Assuming a gross value of $14.00 per hundred weight for the milk, cow no. 1 earned you $2,240.00 in that year. During this same time, cow no. 2 earned only $1,923.74, or $316.26 less. To determine the total impact of this kind of performance on a dairy farm, multiply $316.26 times 50 (half of the average herd size in this region) and you come up with a final dollar value in excess of $15,813.00 per herd per year—all because of the difference in calving intervals. That's a pretty sizeable amount of money.

Another way of making the comparison is to determine the number of cows required to produce milk with a given market value. In this illustration let's assume that farm no. 1 has 100 cows producing 16,000 pounds of milk per lactation with a 12 month calving interval. The question then becomes: "How many cows are required in herd no. 2 to produce the same amount of milk with the same production per lactation but a 14 month calving interval?" Or, if you like, rephrase this question in terms of dairy income representing the difference in total milk output due to the differences in calving intervals.

It's easy to calculate the effects of longer calving intervals on herd size.

Herd no. 1 produces 1,600,000 pounds of milk in 12 months from 100 cows. Herd no. 2 produces only 1,374,100 pounds from their 100 cows over that same period. In order to produce the same amount of milk in a year (1,600,000 pounds), herd no. 2 needs 16.4 more cows (2,259 divided by 13,741). Similar consequences can be calculated for different herd sizes and other calving intervals.

The point is, it requires more cows, more milk per cow, more work, more feed-and just plain more of everything-to end up with the same amount of milk and money when calving intervals are longer than they should be.

The economic effect of long calving intervals is obvious. It required almost 17 percent more cows to produce that same gross income in this example. Can you afford to feed this many extra cows? Especially with limited feed supplies and today's high costs?

What's the solution? To reduce the cost of long calving intervals, you must develop an effective reproduction management program. This can include the following: complete animal identification, adequate and complete records, and effective estrus detection program, proper breeding procedures, a sound animal health program, an adequately balanced ration and a monthly veterinary check of all cows that are not pregnant. If any one of these factors is missing, the result will be excessively long calving intervals. Silent heat is one of the biggest problems, but the new "activity meters" (from USDA research that's at least 10 years old) promise to be a big new help.

It is possible to make more money with less cows. Reaching that goal isn't easy but by working with good herd records, a veterinarian, your local extension service, the feed supplier and, in particular, good DHI records, you can achieve excellent reproductive performance. And that's one of the keys to profit in today's dairy business.

Forestry seminar slated

FREDERICK, Md. — The Mid-Atlantic Forestry Seminar will be held in Frederick, Md. on Oct. 27.

Sponsored by the University of Maryland Cooperative Extension Service (UMCES), the seminar features general session speakers from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources.

It focuses on specific problems facing today's forest and woodland owners in a series of workshops, including:

—Computer software can help owners evaluate management programs on their land.

—Forest landowners can develop an arsenal of commonsense practices to maintain the environmental integrity of their holdings.

—Small woodlot owners can earn money, too.

—If someone is hiking, camping, hunting or logging on your property, what are your legal rights and responsibilities?

The seminar runs from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Registration is a must and the registration fee of $20 before Oct. 13 includes lunch and a forestry handbook.

For more information about the seminar, or to register, call: Terry Poole, Extension Agent, Frederick County, at (301) 694-1594.

Bradford Co. DHIA

(Continued from Page D21)

Brianne	3	4	305	22 946	946
Tina	3	4	305	22,877	362
Kendall Strawn					
Diane	3	5	305	17 153	777
Calkins Farm					
Doll	3	4	305	20,125	825
Rosa	3	3	305	19 504	837
Paul Sargeant					
37	3	4	305	21 986	778
Abraham S Derstine					
Lulu	3	6	305	24,292	914
Tace	3	7	305	17 997	848
Inca	3	2	303	21 315	827
W L Huntington & Son					
80	3	5	305	18 065	759
Raymond D MacWhinnie					
Spooke	3	5	305	21 139	803
Scott & Lynn Cook					
Janine	3	8	305	18 646	816
Nichole	3	5	305	21,512	875
Amy	3	4	305	18 592	798
Renee	3	3	305	21,265	781
Hermit Hill Farm					
7	3	5	305	23 712	841
Donna 21	3	3	305	21 600	927
Roy Hutchinson & Sons					
Rena	3	5	305	25,610	965
Kelly	3	2	297	18 260	754
Providence Acres					
529	3	6	305	20 360	774
Lawrence A Swartley					
38	3	8	305	21 837	990
Abell Farms					
G101	3	4	305	22 965	817
Barrett Brothers					
9	3	6	260	19,041	823
Latini Brothers B&W					
63joc	3	11	272	14 869	795
Calvin & Rick Shaffer					
76	3	5	305	18 141	768
Parks Knoll Farms					
137	3	4	305	17 624	762
Stuart Wrisley					
5577	3	4	304	18,643	760
Mop	3	4	305	24 272	897
Paul Robbins					
Reba	3	5	305	16 397	759