CAFRE Dairy Herd Fertility Summary 2014-2020

The fertility performance of the CAFRE dairy herd is summarised Table 1 below.

Selection of sires to breed for improved daughter fertility is prioritised within the herd.

During the breeding season, all cows are examined ahead of service at weekly veterinary visits along with any non-cycling cows

and cows due for pregnancy diagnosis.

Activity monitors are used as heat detection aids along with regular reviews of the breeding records and visual observation.

There are encouraging signs that fertility performance is moving in the right direction, with 2 out of the last 3 years having significantly higher

numbers of animals pregnant at the end of the breeding season, taken against a backdrop of a shorter breeding season.

The number of animals not in calf at the end of the breeding season is probably the single biggest factor impacting on the cost of fertility on a

dairy farm, as the cost of rearing replacement heifers is considerably higher than the sale value of a cull cow.

A lot more animals are now calving early in the season, giving them more time to be ready for the start of breeding and also allowing selection

of animals that will be breed for the next generation of heifers.

The breeding season has been reduced to six months, with the intention to reduce this further over the next couple of years, so that the

vast majority of animals calve from the end of September to Christmas.

Putting high emphasis on selection for fertility and longevity when selecting sires for breeding replacement heifers does seem to be

making an impact on the fertility figures.

Table 1. CAFRE dairy herd fertility summary 2014-2020

Breeding season	No. of cows	Days to first service	First service submission rate (%)	Days to conception	1st service conception rate (%)	Overall conception rate (%)	Cows pregnant	Pregnant (%)	Serves / cow	Serves / conception
2014 - 2015	140	59	89%	98	26%	28%	112	80%	2.82	3.53
2015 - 2016	139	60	92%	108	22%	31%	114	82%	2.68	3.27
2016 - 2017	168	63	89%	118	30%	27%	134	80%	2.98	3.74
2017 - 2018	177	65	92%	106	36%	37%	157	89%	2.40	2.70
2018 - 2019	187	72 [1]	83%	104	36%	36%	149	80%	2.19	2.74
2019 -2020	183	77 [2]	81%	107	45%	46%	166	91%	1.97	2.17

[1] Start of breeding season put back by 2 weeks to 7th Dec, (normally 23rd Nov)

[2] Start of breeding season put back to 14th Dec