



December 2022 Bovine Newsletter

Happy New Year! We wish you all the best for a healthy and prosperous 2023.

GOALS

Where do you want to be next year? On a beach? A ski slope? In a new barn? Working harder for less money? While there will be several days this winter that you'll be hoping for the first of these, there are likely zero days you'd hope for the last. It is important to set goals that are readily attainable, as well as 'we never thought we'd get here goals' to help keep the motivation high. There are some days and weeks when the goal seems to be minimalistic - like I hope everyone shows up for work today, or I hope the scrapper stayed on track today. The point is, it is important to set goals, to look at the bigger picture for a moment so we don't get lost in the day-to-day operations of the farm.

As care givers and advisors, we have a few goals for our clients and maybe some of these points will spark some discussion at your operation or on our next visit.

1. Transition health – there is nothing better for a dairyperson than a cow dropping a healthy calf and being ready to rock and roll into her lactation. This is something cows do that we love. However, this is the hardest thing to get right as it involves all aspects of the farms management ability. It is also the single most important indicator of future calving's: to have got it right this time! She will milk more, breed better and return to peak production in a profitable fashion. Example goals: <10% ketosis, <5% involuntary culls by 60dim
2. More pregnancies – no matter what your program, waiting period, breed and sire selection criteria for replacements, we want everything pregnant as soon as possible. The key here is managing the 15-30% of the cows in your herd that do not breed easily. Most monitoring systems will present the easy, cycling cows to you for service. Identifying the ones that are going to require more attention early can turn them around. Early lactation checks for endometritis, anovular and cystic cows will create a precision approach to individual cows to reach your herd pregnancy goals. Example goals: 30% preg rate cows.
3. Cow comfort – Pro-action has metrics to identify areas of attention for the housing of the animals. We would add to that the measuring of fresh cow diseases, including lameness and BCS as indicators of the transition success. There are plenty of design suggestions for housing during lactating, far off dry, close up dry and calving. We would like to see the most economical construction that allows cows freedoms of movement and expression of behaviours that indicate they're comfortable with the facility. Example goals: Perfect Pro-action, reduced culls from injury

4. Filling quota – the above three fine tune some cow specific areas but really will drive your ability to fill quota. We want everyone to fill quota. Sometimes at our little vet meetings we talk about how a farm is ‘killing it’ on production or now must sell some cows because they’re over. It’s a great sign of cows being able to perform and excel in the conditions the farm has provided for them. Example goals: quota filled!
5. More margin – this is a major point and one that can easily lead to getting stuck on one side of the profit equation. Less expense is not always more margin, nor is extreme production. Having the cows ‘do it easy’ is the goal here, which means they eat lots and produce high kgs of butterfat. Example goals: set benchmark for \$/kg quota or cost of production
6. Calf Health – everyone on the farm is happy when young calves thrive. With our calf health program, we have seen health and performance advances on all participating farms. There are many nuances to calf rearing and we are excited and well equipped to help turn those babies into productive 2-yr old’s. Example goals: 85% double birth weight by 60 days, 95% heifers born calve on farm

The above are 6 simple points to develop some goals for 2023. Coordinating and communicating with all on farm advisors will help accelerate the speed at which these goals can be achieved or help identify the most rate limiting factor for success.

Pharmacy

A short note on products to let you know that we have seen some supply chain strain when it comes to keeping our commonly used products on the shelf and in the trucks. We have had to be flexible with brands to ensure your cows have what they need, when they need it. We appreciate your patience and flexibility, and we hope to see a more stable supply in 2023.