

# MAIDEN HEIFERS

## GOALS FOR MAIDEN HEIFERS

1

Calve all the maiden heifers in February 2021, 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 beef sires on the mature cows.

## 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 - 600 Kg cow mature weight heifers need to be 350 - 360 Kg without being fat. Heifers that are less than 320Kgs need supplementary feeding.
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.

## 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 is near the crush or housing them on silage. This will reduce heat activity and conception rates.
2. HEIFERS 50KG OR LESS UNDER TARGET WEIGHT:  
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 until November.

## HEAT DETECTION

Decide which method or combination of heat detection you are going to use. Ideally for heifers use two methods as they can be difficult to detect accurately. Vasectomised bulls, scratch cards or paint sticks are superior to tail paint with heifers, as heifers are not heavy enough to rub off the paint unlike cows.

- ✓ Vasectomised Bull & Scratch Cards or Paint Sticks
- ✓ Scratch Cards & Paint Sticks



## FAMILIARIZE THE HEIFERS WITH THE CRUSH AND YARD

Familiarize the heifers with the yard and crush by bringing them in daily and for encouragement feed them 1Kg per day of feed. This will ensure when you need to bring them in it will be easy and without delays.

In option 1 on synchronisation the heifers will be in the yard daily for 12 days.

In option 2 or 3 they will be in the yard for 3 or 4 days.

## 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.

## MONITOR STOCK BULL WHEN RELEASED

In maiden heifers it is crucial to monitor the stock bull throughout the season either with a chinball or scratch cards on the heifers. Repeats are not as evident in maidens; they are usually checked mid-day and activity is greatest early in the morning after daybreak or very late in the evening. Following synchronisation, the stock bull can be left in the following day. Remove the stock bull for the 2-4 days the repeats are due and apply the heat detection aids. However, AI'ing the repeats ensures that the bulls are not overworked, fertility is maximised, and it avoids bulls getting injured ensuring we will have them when we need them. AI each day when more than 1 repeat is presented to a young bull or 2 to a mature bull. Periods of low conception rate can occur when an increased number of repeats are presented to the bull.