

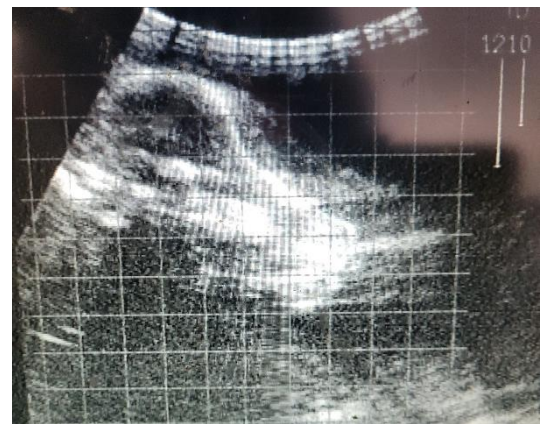
## Pregnancy Diagnosis in Cattle

Most of our vets use an ultrasound machine for pregnancy diagnosis (Test) in cattle.

The best time to ultrasound cattle for accurate aging of the foetus is between 6-to-16-week gestational age of the foetus.

### **When to pregnancy test in beef herds**

The best way to get accurate calving dates for beef cattle is 6 weeks after the bulls have been removed from the herd.



### **When to pregnancy test in dairy herds**

The best way to get accurate calving dates is to have two rounds of pregnancy testing.

1. The first round is done 7 or 8 weeks after the end of AI. Cows that are pregnant to AI are identified.
2. The second round is done 7 or 8 weeks after the bulls come out, so it is possible to identify all empty cows and cows that are pregnant to the bull.

Two rounds of pregnancy testing are more accurate because it is easier to age pregnancies early on. It is easy to tell an 8-week pregnancy from a 12-week pregnancy but very difficult, if not impossible, to differentiate between a 5-month and 6-month pregnancy.

The advantages of accurate calving dates are: -

- Drying off dates can be more accurately judged. Late cows can be milked through June and July if conditions are favorable. There will be money to be made during these months.
- There is less chance of dry cow antibiotic residues in the milk.
- Cows can start getting their transition feed at the right time.

### **Pregnancy testing dairy heifers**

We like to pregnancy test heifers early because it is very difficult to age beyond 3½ months. The calf falls out of reach in heifers earlier than in older cows.

Compared with older cows a higher percentage of heifers are pregnant in the first 3 weeks. An early preg test will only leave a few heifers that will require a second pregnancy test later.

The advantage of identifying empty and late calving heifers is that they can be sold for export. Late calving heifers are less profitable because they are difficult to get back in calf quickly once they enter the milking herd and often end up empty or as carry-over cows.

If heifers have been artificially inseminated an early preg test will help identify those that are pregnant to AI. This is particularly important when you have used sexed semen.

### **Early pregnancy testing of cows to detect “Phantom cows”**

With the ultrasound we have been pregnancy testing down to as low as day 31 after insemination. We have been doing this to identify non-pregnant cows that have not come back on heat (“Phantom cows”).

These non-pregnant cows that are not seen back on heat are the “phantom cows” that often do not start cycling again until joining period. These cows are very frustrating but when they are identified early enough there is a chance to join them again before it is too late.