



**ClieNFarms**  
Climate Neutral Farms

## ClieNFarms EIP-AGRI Practice Abstracts

# Reducing the age at first calving

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Reducing the age at first calving of heifers reduces the number of unproductive animals on the farm and thus reduces enteric methane emissions, which represent the main emissions on a dairy farm. In addition, the area freed up by less unproductive animals can increase the forage security of the farm, which is particularly interesting in a context of drought.

To succeed with this early calving, you must be careful with:

- Adapting the feeding of young animals: having quality fodder and adapted LSU on grazing, but also adapting the intake of concentrates.
- Monitoring the growth of the heifers: measuring the weight of the animals.
- Detection of heat and control of reproduction.

For example, Trevarez demonstration farm reduced the age at first calving by 2 months between the periods 2015-2017 and 2018-2020 thanks to a better growth of the heifers but also a better choice of the renewal heifers. Indeed, on this experimental farm, the age at first calving has been reduced from 27 to 25 months thanks to a ration consisting of unlimited hay, water and a concentrate based on faba bean and a barley pellet. The heifers are weaned at 100kg, which corresponds to 75 days of age in 2018. At the age of 6 months, the heifers weigh 200kg and it is from this moment that the grazing is maximized.

During the implementation of this action, the consumption of concentrates was certainly increased by 100kg, but this increase is compensated by a decrease of 660kg of dry matter of fodder needed thanks to a 2-months reduction of unproductive period.

The implementation of this practice on an experimental farm can be an example for commercial farms.



(a) Heifers on Trevarez farm (b) Concentrate based on faba bean (c) Barley pellet



To learn more about Trevarez farm go to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T9Y504VXbYA>



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