

ClieNFarms Practice Abstracts

Optimise the time between the last calving and slaughter in beef farms

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Early detection of non-pregnant (empty) cows and rapid fattening can reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to 7%. Herd productivity is the ratio between production level and the time required to achieve it. Putting cull cows on fattening feed more quickly achieves the same results (weight, classification) but in a shorter timeframe. This saves on fodder stock, straw purchases, and building requirements.

Above 300 days, between the last calving and the animal's sale at the butchers, for cull cows, the economic benefit remains limited (except for exceptional value). With a high mortality rate (>10%), this period should be shortened. Also, consider the breed of the animals, some need more time to be finished than others.

To reduce the time spent by cows destined for slaughter, two areas must be addressed simultaneously: animal sorting and herd condition.

Sorting cows to be culled:

- Cull cows that lose calves before breeding. Sort cows with calves not put to breeding, group them together, and feed them the best forages to start and even finish their fattening before weaning.

- Perform pregnancy assessments as soon as possible. Ideally, 30-40 days after the date of cessation of breeding:
- For fall calvings, this diagnosis must be performed before turning out to pasture.
- For winter and spring calvings, take the opportunity to do this while handling the herd, well before weaning the calves. Any cow diagnosed as empty must be culled. Make a batch of empty cows and feed them like cows with calves that have not been bred.

Herd Condition: To achieve "reasonable" fattening times, it is important that the herd of cows have a correct body condition score especially for first-calf cows, which could be supplemented during the early lactation-reproduction phase.



Figure 1 : Fattening length.



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