

Setting Goals to Improve Breeding Strategies

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Problem identification is the first step in establishing objectives and goals to improve reproductive management in a dairy herd. Management is determining what must be done and achieving results through the efforts of yourself and your employees.

Use the following worksheet to evaluate herd reproductive performance and set goals to improve your breeding strategies. Then develop a tactical plan to achieve these goals using the second worksheet. List those involved on your management team and their responsibilities. Include your extension agent, veterinarian and other consultants.

Herd Summary Reproductive Management Worksheet

Name: _____ Herd Code: _____

Using your Herd Summary Sheet (DHI-202), calculate or identify the following:

For the Breeding Herd:	Your Herd	Georgia Average*	Goal
1. Total Cows in Breeding Herd		145	>100
2. Voluntary Waiting Period (Days)		57	<50
3. Avg. Days to 1st Service		99	<70
For the Total Herd:			
4. % of Possible Heats Observed		30	>70
5. Avg. Days to 1st Service (All Lactation)		104	<80
6. Services per Pregnancy for Preg. Cows (All Lactation)		2.1	≤2.0
7. Services per Pregnancy for All Cows (All Lactation)		3.3	≤2.5
8. Calving Interval (All Lactation)		15.2	≤12.5
9. Avg. Days Open (All Lactation)		181	≤100
10. Services for Past 12 Months			
A. Number of Services		526	>300
B. % Successful	1st	50	≥50
	2nd	43	>40
	3rd	32	>30
	Total	43	≥40
11. Miscellaneous			
A. Avg. Days Dry		73	60
B. Avg. Age 1st Lactation		26	23-25
C. Identified Predicting Females (All Lactation)		40	>98
D. Cows Leaving Herd/Repro.		21	>35

* Values from DHI202 for State of Georgia Averages (4/2009).

Next, you need a plan. Use the following form to better define your goals. Tasks should be precise and itemized for each plan of action. Tasks describe exactly who, what, when, where and how activities will take place in order to accomplish each goal.

Finally, remember that re-training is essential. Your goals should be important to the overall breeding strategies of the operation. Assign the right person to each task. Consider a pay incentive for completing each task or accomplishing each goal. With your plan, make sure you know what is going to be measured, who is going to do it, when it should be done and how you are going to know things are better.

Goal	What task or activities are to be done?	Who is responsible?	How and/or where should the task be done?	When to perform task or activity (deadline, frequency, under what conditions)?

