

# Bull Fertility

Your bull's fertility is instrumental in achieving the maximum number of calves per year. A realistic target in a suckler herd is 95 calves reared per 100 cows/year.

This is dependent on the following:

- Bull fertility and selection
- Disease
- Nutrition
- Trace element deficiencies

A normal fertile bull would be expected to get 90% of 50 normal cycling disease free females pregnant within a 9 week period.

Of these 60% should be pregnant within the first three weeks.

It has been shown that around **1 in 3 bulls tested are suffering from impaired fertility** ranging from being sub-fertile (depressed fertility), infertile (temporary inability to reproduce) or sterile (complete and permanent inability to reproduce).



Reasons for this impaired fertility included:

- Unsound/Lameness
- Poor scrotal circumference
- Poor semen quality
- Poor serving ability

**Bull breeding soundness examination - the new service we now offer!**

A bull breeding and soundness examination needs to be carried out 4-6 weeks before the service period and the aim is to identify bulls with fertility problems.

It comprises the following stages:

- A full physical examination including reproductive organs.
- Semen collection and a detailed microscopic examination of its quality.

### Collection of semen by electro-ejaculation:

Semen previously was collected by using an artificial vagina which was not only tedious but potentially dangerous! We have invested in a modern electro-ejaculator which by means of a rectal probe supplies increasing amounts of electrical stimulation until a sample is produced. Bulls need to be restrained in a crush which allows easy access to its underbelly for the procedure. Breeding soundness examinations should be performed annually before each breeding season as a fertile bull one year may not be fertile the next.



The fee is our normal visit charge plus £75 for the first bull and £60 for subsequent bulls.

**Compare this to the cost of an unproductive suckler cow for a year of £220-£250!**

### Forthcoming Meeting:

#### Bluetongue Disease



We are holding a meeting on Thursday 21st February on the subject of Bluetongue disease.

The meeting should be of interest to all cattle and sheep farmers.

Please note that the meeting will be held at **Doveridge Working Men's Club** rather than our normal meeting venue! We plan to start at 8.00pm.

