



## **Fertility in Cattle**

In today's world it is popular to talk about growth rates and beef quality but the most important factor determining profitability of organic cow-calf operations is reproductive efficiency. "A dead calf has a very poor growth rate" this concept also applies to an "un" conceived or unborn calf.

The starting point for good fertility is having a healthy cow. The right environment, cow comfort, space, ventilation, light, hygiene and diet are key. Disease elimination through committed bio security both farm to farm and internal, through separate calf housing, avoidance of through traffic and a disinfection routine between young stock and older animals, is crucial.

The list of diseases affecting reproduction is lengthy; IBR, BVD, Lepto, and Vibrio are only a few but fortunately these can be prevented through vaccination. Proactive veterinary advice and intervention will drive output through improved fertility and hence viability of the herd.

Although health traits are multi factorial, lameness management is crucial to fertility. Herds with rigid hoof care regimes have increased heat detection rates, increased conception rates and therefore increased numbers of pregnant cows.

Finally to achieve this, record keeping and a dedicated herdsman are what's needed to address the challenges of maintaining and improving fertility of the cow herd.

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