



The Point



Management and environment play the greatest role in conception

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Many factors influence conception rate. While most often we focus on the cow or service bull, it's important to realize that management and environment factors account for the bulk (96 percent) of the variation in conception rates.

Clearly, the greatest gains to be made in conception are through management and environment factors. Management of first lactation heifers, transition cows and breeding groups are all key factors for improving conception rates. Consider these three management areas as you are looking for ways to improve reproduction.

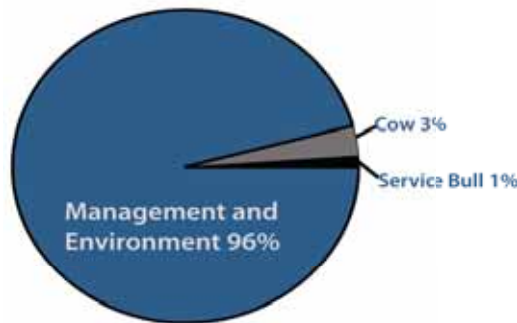
First lactation heifers should be managed in their own group. Heifers won't compete with older cows at the bunk like they need to. As a result dry matter intake suffers, leading to slower growth and difficulties breeding back quickly.

Transition cows need a minimum of 30 inches per cow at the bunk space, or 80 – 85 percent of the headlock capacity. Studies show dry matter intake drops when headlock capacity is over 80-85 percent. Consequently reduction in dry matter intake often leads to metabolic disorders/disease and excessive body condition loss. All of which has a negative affect on reproduction.

Don't overcrowd breeding groups. Overcrowding more than 10 percent is a stressor and while milk production can often survive the effects of overcrowding, reproduction can't. In herds where overcrowding is not an issue we see improved reproductive performance.

Key factors for improving conception rates include fine tuning management and environment of the cows. Take time to review and evaluate these key areas and make sure you are providing the optimal situation for cows to become pregnant. ☆

Factors that Influence Conception Rate



Need more heifer calves?

Getting heifers pregnant is a task in itself, but once you get them pregnant you only have a 48 percent chance it will be the kind of calf you want... a heifer. Now with the availability of gender SELECTed™ semen, you can improve your odds of getting more heifer calves.



It is true the conception rate of gender SELECTed semen isn't as high as conventional semen. However when you do the math even with the lower conception it's still possible to generate more heifer calves with gender SELECTed semen.

Let's say you breed 100 heifers with conventional semen. On average you'll run a 60 percent conception rate and of those that conceive 48 percent will have heifer calves. The result: the 100 heifers bred with conventional semen will result in 29 heifer calves. If you breed 100 heifers with gender SELECTed semen on average you'll obtain a 45 percent conception rate, but of those you get pregnant, 90 percent will have heifer calves. The result: the 100 heifers bred with gender SELECTed semen will result in 40 heifer calves. Heifer calves are valuable to your

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