



## Consistency key to 23% pregnancy rate

**Consistency from the time** cows calve until they are pregnant again plays an important role in achieving a 23 percent pregnancy rate at Krueger Dairy in Shawano, Wisconsin. Brad and Vicki Krueger agree the team effort of Brad Herzog, NorthStar Cooperative A.I. technician and veterinarian Dr. Jeff McFarlane is critical to the herd's reproduction success.

"Since we have made everything consistent from calving on through to breeding, things have really started working," agreed Brad and Vicki. "It comes down to everyone doing their job, every time."

Since 1995, when Brad and Vicki began operation of the dairy; the herd has grown from 80 to 620 cows. Along with that growth has been dramatic changes to facilities and management practices; including the reproduction program. Initially the Kruegers bred their own cows, however through expansion time became more limited and herd bulls were used.

With interest in improving the herd's production and reproduction, Brad and Vicki decided to use NorthStar's professional A.I. technician service. For nearly two years Brad Herzog has worked with Krueger Dairy administering synchronization shots, breeding, entering data into Dairy Comp 305 and working closely with Dr. McFarlane on virtually every

aspect relating to the reproduction program.

"We are completely hands-off with the breeding program and we expect results," Brad noted. "We provide a healthy cow after calving and in 39 days we turn her over to Brad (Herzog) to get pregnant."

Currently, the herd has a 23 percent pregnancy rate, the highest it's ever been and first service conception rate is at 50 percent.

"Fifty percent first service conception is great for a herd this size," stated Jay Krull, NorthStar Reproduction Solutions Specialist. "Most herds this size have a goal of 40 percent and hope to reach it."

The breeding protocol at Krueger Dairy starts with a 70-day voluntary waiting period. All cows are bred first service on the Presynch protocol. If cows are open at herd check, they are enrolled in Ovsynch or the Ovsynch 1 Week program.

Ovsynch 1 Week is a unique program implemented by Dr. McFarlane for use on anovular or static ovaries as diagnosed by transrectal ultrasonography. The protocol includes a GnRH shot on Day 1, followed by a second injection of GnRH on Day 8. Dr. McFarlane then re-ultrasounds these cows on Day 15 to diagnose if there

*Brad and Vicki Krueger with NorthStar Cooperative A.I. technician Brad Herzog.*

is enough luteal tissue to complete the Ovsynch. If cows have a corpus luteum, they are given a shot of Lutalyse® on Day 15. Forty-eight hours later (Day 17) responsive cows are given GnRH and are bred. Those that did not respond to the 2 GnRH shots are re-evaluated for appropriate action.

"This protocol saves days, hormones, semen and service as we don't complete Ovsynch and breed cows until we are as sure as we can be of having a fertile ovulation in the presence of luteal tissue," remarked Dr. McFarlane.

While synchronization works great in the cow herd, a tail chalk program is what Herzog uses for the heifers. Heifers are bred at 14 months of age, with gender SELECTed™ semen

"Using gender SELECTed™ semen is an easy decision," Brad remarked. "We are looking to build replacements; and bull bred heifers aren't worth as much and bull calves have little value. We're happy with the results. I've been watching and we are getting 90 percent or better heifer calves with gender SELECTed™."

Of course with the growth in herd size, the facilities have changed dramatically. The barns have been retro-fitted through the expansion process, allowing the Kruegers to add as many cows as possible with the least amount of investment. Cow comfort has remained a high priority throughout the expansion process. In addition to creating a special needs barn; particular attention was paid to building large, comfortable free-stalls which are bedded with sand. And for the first time ever, there are as many stalls at Krueger Dairy as there are cows.

"I never wanted to believe overcrowding caused problems, but now that every cow has a stall our reproduction and herd health have gotten better and production has also improved," Brad noted.

Another addition, through the expansion, was a double 10 Parabone Parlor, which is a Herringbone style rear milking parlor, with electronic meters to record milk weights. An office was also added to the barn; allowing easier access to record and manage herd health data.

"Moving the computer to the barn has allowed us to be more proactive," said Jay. "We are now able to pull reports to monitor what's happening with the reproduction program."

"One thing we discovered by being able to monitor the records more closely is that not enough cows were settling prior to 70 days in milk," stated Brad Herzog, "so now we don't breed any cows before that."

Brad and Vicki agree the compliance to follow protocols has really helped improve the reproduction program.

"We've had a long standing relationship with NorthStar," Brad stated, "and we believe it's important to work with a cooperative. We appreciate NorthStar's quality people and products and their progressive attitude. We count on Brad (Herzog) to give us above average numbers and provide consistent results in generating pregnancies and he does." ★

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