

Why Getting it Right matters to you...

Cogent Sexed Semen can make you so much money. Success is all about careful planning and preparation of both animal and semen.

By adhering to some basic principles, from choosing the right cows and heifers, followed by handling the semen correctly, Sexed Semen can provide fit and healthy heifer calves for your dairy herd.

Choosing the right animals

Sexed semen is ideal for use in maiden heifers as each subsequent calving reduces fertility.

90 days before service) Be selective – cows that have had mastitis, held cleansings, lameness or bad health should not be served with Sexed Semen.

High yielding cows need longer to recover before being served. As a rule of thumb, number of days can be estimated by multiplying the daily peak yield by two (e.g. 45 litres daily peak =

Sexed Semen is not recommended for use with synchronisation programmes where heifers or cows are bred using fixed time insemination.



Nutrition & Health

From at least a month before the service period the aim is to get heifers & cows settled, stress free and gaining condition.

1. Pre-Service Period Management & Nutrition

Heifers should be moved into easily handled groups. Large groups can be difficult to handle and can cause stress.

Cows milking heavily, in negative energy balance and losing condition are less likely to get in calf. Settle the animals onto a consistent diet, nutritionally balanced for energy, protein and minerals preferably on a rising plane of nutrition.

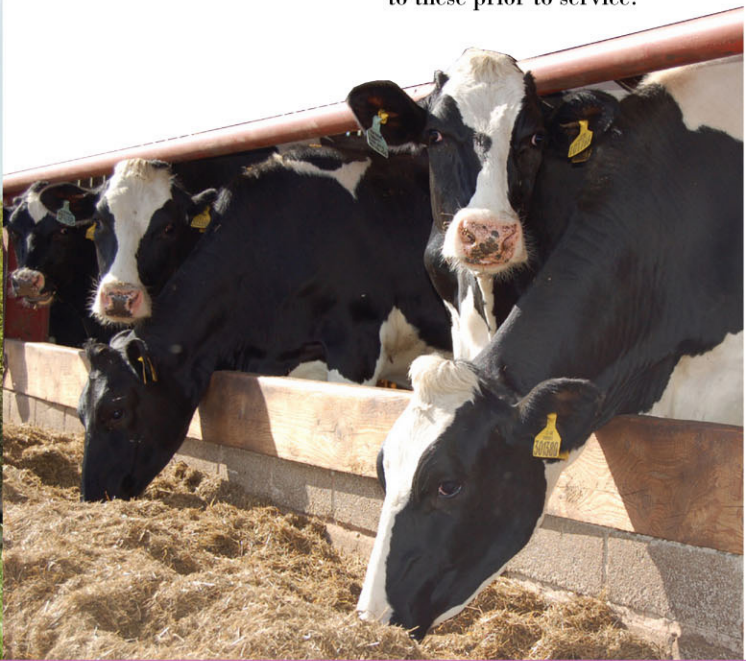
Do not make diet changes for one month before or after the service period.

2. Reproductive Health in Cows and Heifers

Reduce disease known to impair reproductive performance by early diagnosis, treatment or preferably prevention by vaccination e.g. Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD) and Leptospirosis.

Ensure that post calving cow has resumed normal cyclic activity and that the uterus has prepared itself for a subsequent pregnancy and is free of infection or damage e.g vaginal discharge (endometritis).

Cows with concurrent disease e.g. mastitis or lameness are less fertile and careful consideration should be given to these prior to service.



Handling SEXED SEMEN

- Maximising conception rates are dependent upon attention to detail. On farm results have clearly shown that following the simple steps below will ensure the best possible success rates
- Use tweezers, never fingers to handle straws.
- Never take out an individual straw to look at and then put back. It will almost certainly damage the sperm.
- Minimise the length of time that a straw container is kept above the liquid nitrogen level whilst removing the straw to be used. Take no more than 5 seconds (if you need longer, lower the canister back into the nitrogen for at least 10 seconds before trying again.)



Be Prepared!



Use tweezers, never fingers to handle straws.



Thaw the straw straight away in an electric thawer at 37°C for 40 seconds



Use clean straw cutters, or sharp scissors to cut off the sealed end.

Straw Thawing

1. Check the temperature of the water in your thawing device with a thermometer.
2. Only remove one straw at a time for thawing.
3. Flick the straw to remove any trapped nitrogen.
4. Thaw the straw straight away in an electric thawer at 37°C for 40 seconds
5. Thoroughly dry the straw, water kills sperm.
6. Use clean straw cutters, or sharp scissors to cut off the sealed end.
7. Once thawed don't let the straw cool down again.
8. Pre-warm the AI equipment and keep it insulated until the insemination (especially in cold weather).
9. Animals should be inseminated within 5 minutes of removing from the tank.
10. Once thawed, straws cannot be re-frozen.
11. Do not split straws.

Service Time

1. Heat Observation

Observe heifers / cows at least 3 times daily for at least 15 minutes especially in between milking and feeding times.

Many cows may show very short periods of standing heat. Evening heat detection is essential. Record standing heats accurately to verify regular oestrus cycle length. Cows or heifers with abnormal cycle length will be less fertile.

Heat synchronisation programmes should only be used in conjunction with good heat detection and not based on fixed time AI.

Heifers and cows should be restrained so that they cannot move forwards and backwards or sideways. A proper service area and crush are essential. Quietly move animals to the service crush in pairs or small groups. Animals on their own become frightened and stressed.



Other signs of oestrus e.g. mounting, chin resting, vocalisation can be less reliable signs of heat. Less valuable semen can be used to serve these animals even using 2 inseminations 24 hours apart. This is not advised for Sexed Semen.

3. AI Technique Because Sexed Semen is a premium product, only inseminate heifers that have been identified in standing oestrus. Heifers do have a small cervix which can make it difficult to pass the AI gun through.

Heat detection aids are very important e.g. Kamars and tailpaint.

It is important that semen deposition is in the uterine body and NOT in the cervix or up one of the horns.

2. The Service Period

During this period you should ensure stress free handling to ensure best results, service should be carried out 12 hours after the onset of standing oestrus.