

# ABS Sexcel™ - Heifer Rearing

To maximise success when using Sexcel™, heifers should be settled, stress free, and have been reared successfully to an optimal weight and body condition score.

## 1. Rearing management goals

- Complete any veterinary recommended preventative treatments such as vaccinations for disease or anthelmintic treatments at least 4 weeks prior to breeding
- Keep the heifer group in the same group and environment (breeding pen) for 6 weeks prior to and following breeding
- Keep heifers on the same diet for 6 weeks prior to and following breeding
  - i. Increasing the nutritional value of the ration prior to breeding is advisable under the guidance of a nutritional consultant
  - ii. Special attention to levels of copper, zinc, selenium, iodine and vitamins A and E are needed over the 12 week period before service
- Avoid new heifers entering the group during the breeding period where possible
- 55-60% of target mature weight at start of planned breeding (330-360 kg (725-790 lbs) for an animal expected to calve in at 600kg (1,325 lbs))
- At least 12 months of age
- Target body condition score of 2.5-3.0 at service
- Growth rates of 0.75-0.8kg/day (1.75 lb/day) are recommended for Holstein Friesians from birth to calving
- Target 90% of mature weight at calving

## 2. Breeding period

- Observe heifers for at least 3 weeks prior to breeding to ensure normal oestrous events are occurring
  - i. Observing 2 natural heat events is best
- If no oestrous is expressed prior to start of breeding or the heifer has not expressed oestrus within 4 weeks of eligibility for insemination, present to a veterinary for examination
- Accurately identify heifers that are eligible for service
- Best results are obtained when inseminating heifers following excellent heat detection accuracy
- Expect lower conception rates when breeding to observed heats or at fixed time breeding following hormone intervention strategies
- Use a safe and low stress handling facilities for restraining heifers for insemination
- Retain heifers in the breeding group until 6 weeks post breeding and when confirmed pregnant
- Accurately record the identification of the heifer inseminated and Sexcel product used