The new herd management tool for Australian dairy farmers and their advisers

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The InCalf “vision”
“To enable Australian dairy farmers to achieve measured improvement in herd reproductive performance.”

What is InCalf?
A performance report which measures individual herd fertility performance
A system which provides a reference manual, “tools” and support network to aid farmers in achieving improvements in herd fertility

InCalf’s evolution from research to extension
1. Research
National Dairy Herd Fertility Project: >200 herds 40,000 cows

2. Info. transfer
Phase 1 and 2 Extension: 400 advisers, adviser training course + farmer course

3. Extension

InCalf research study answered these key questions:
• What are the best measures of overall herd reproductive performance?
• What are top farmers achieving?
• What herd management areas are most important to herd reproductive performance?
Key measures of overall herd reproductive performance in seasonal/split calving herds

- **6 week in-calf rate**
  \( \% \) of cows pregnant after 6 weeks of mating

- **Not-in-calf rate**
  \( \% \) of cows not pregnant at the end of a mating period

### Herd reproductive performance - InCalf research study herds

- **Seasonal/split calving herds**
  - Typical
  - Top farmers

### Year-round calving herds

#### 100-day in-calf rate

#### 200-day not in-calf rate

### Herd Fertility

- Is like a cake
- Herd Management areas
  - 7 ingredients

### InCalf’s evolution from research to extension

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2. Info. transfer
   - National Dairy Herd Fertility Project:
     - >200 herds
     - 40,000 cows
   - Phase 1 and 2 Extension:
     - 400 advisers,
Problems in measuring herd reproductive performance:

- Lack of a common language
- Terms with more than one meaning
- Different terms used interchangeably (e.g., conception rate and non-return rate).
- Limitations in the use of ‘not-in-calf’ rate as the only primary herd performance measure

The InCalf “process”

- To focus on management change for incremental gains rather than “best management practice” and/or “problem solving”
- A process to support change through time
- Emphasis on networking between different advisers to support change

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2. Info. transfer
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Adviser Training Course + Farmer Course

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Continuous improvement in herd reproductive performance

Step 1: Assess current herd reproductive performance
Step 2: Identify scope for improvement and associated benefits
Step 3: Consider options for change and select best option(s)
Step 4: Implement selected management option(s)
Review
Fertility Focus Report

- Uses standard measures and calculations
- Enables comparison of herd reproductive performance year-to-year, with other herds and the InCalf targets
- Can be generated with minimal herd records
  - More data gives more accurate and complete picture
- Provided by InCalf-accredited providers:
  - Herd Improvement Centres, Advisors, Software programs

Standard performance measuring tool:

Fertility focus report answers 3 key questions:

- Where am I now?
- What improvements are realistically achievable for my herd?
- What areas for improvement should I be focusing on?
National Analysis

InCalf NatSCAN analysis of herd reproductive performance
- National
- Regional

uses same measures / calculation methods as Fertility Focus Report

InCalf Adviser Training Course

Courses are conducted across Australia = 300 InCalf-trained advisers

InCalf Farmer Action Groups

InCalf Farmer Action Groups

Conclusion

FF report allows farmers to access current fertility performance

FF report uses std terminology for fertility measures

Incentive for farmers to collect & record data

Extra value from herd recording

Questions?