

Heifer Rearing Blueprint

For the best possible chance of success with ABS Sexation ensuring heifers are settled, stress free and in the correct condition are essential.

1. Preparing for service and pregnancy

❑ Heifers should be served at around 55% of mature body weight, or at around 320 - 360kg (depending on your target mature weight).

❑ "Flush" for three months before bulling, by increasing concentrates fed by 1kg/day (i.e. raise from 1.5 to 2.5kg/day with silage, or 0.5 to 1.5kg/day with good grazing).

Flushing improves the condition of the follicles still in the ovary, that you will be trying to fertilise in the weeks to come.

❑ Maintain this energy level for six weeks after the service period to avoid any feeding stress.



❑ Avoid any stressful events such as; worming, housing, changing groups or transporting if at all possible.

❑ Special attention to levels of copper, zinc, selenium, iodine, and vitamins A and E are needed over this 12 week flush period before service.

❑ Vitamin A should be fed at 40,000 IU/day and vitamin E at 250mg/day.

Extra copper is essential to take out any molybdenum present in the diet, which acts as a barrier to fertility, and 25% of this copper should be in the bioplex form.

Selenium fed as a bioplex (rather than as sodium selenite) has been shown to significantly improve fertility in bulling heifers.

2. From service to calving

❑ Concentrate levels can now be reduced to keep the daily weight gain on track to achieve the 85% mature body weight target.

❑ As a rough guide, expect heifer feed intakes, expressed in dry matter, to be around 2% of their body weight.

This is true from the calf feeding stage up to the last two months before calving.

❑ In the last two months of pregnancy weight gain should be restricted to prevent undue calf growth and subsequent calving problems.

❑ Heifers should join the dry cow group for social reasons, to prevent bulling post calving.

❑ Diet should be limited to around 5kg Dry Matter of silage or grazing, and have access to plenty of straw.

❑ Feed 1.5kg of a dry cow pre-calving feed for the last two weeks.

