

# CLEVEDALE VETERINARY PRACTICE

Invite you to an evening on

## ***“ IMPROVING DAIRY HEIFER PRODUCTION ”***

Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2013, 730 pm

at Wilkes Farm, Lealholm

(courtesy of Jonathan and Derek Hutchinson)

How many of us monitor our replacement heifer production as closely as we should? Do we know whether they are growing as well as they should? Are we bulling them as soon as we could or do we fail to achieve growth rates which would allow us to calve them down as soon as we could?

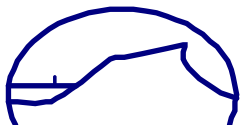
To maximise profitability, attention needs to be aimed not just at the lactating cows, but also the replacement herd, an area which probably doesn't receive as much attention as it should.

Poor growth rates, even in just the first 2-3 weeks of life, impacts negatively on the age at first calving, the amount of milk seen in the first lactation, fertility, retention rates and time to net profitability.

This winter particularly, we have seen a wide variation in quality of colostrum with forage quality having a major impact; this has had a negative impact on calf health as even when calves have been stomach-tubed with the correct quantity of colostrum within the first 6 hours of life, we have still seen problems associated with poor transfer of passive immunity. These problems can be overcome with simple checks on colostrum using “colostrometers” and cheap and easy blood samples taken from calves. Prolonged cold spells have reduced growth rates in calves which have not received extra milk powder to compensate.

As well as presenting some recent research on calf rearing, we intend to discuss some other ideas to maximise efficiency of heifer rearing. There will be an opportunity for you to see and use colostrometers and see just how easy it is to measure calves using weigh tapes and height measurements and set up a simple monitoring system.

Please let the surgery know if you would like to attend – the meeting is free and refreshments will be provided courtesy of “Zoetis” (used to be called “Pfizer”)



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