

# FARM PRACTICE NEWSLETTER

DEC 2011



## Embryo Transfer

Embryo transfer is a technique that is becoming more widespread. This is mainly due to the recognition that it is useful in improving pregnancy rates in repeat breeders as well as the more traditional use for increasing the production of offspring from the best genetics on a farm.



The Practice continues to offer the service of implanting embryos. We are currently unable to offer the full service with regard to flushing donor cows but are in the process of acquiring the appropriate licensing and facilities required to do so.

## Repeat Breeders

There are a number of definitions of the 'repeat breeder'. For the purposes of this technique, the term means a cow that has had at least three services. The conditions for selecting a repeat breeder for embryo implantation are as follows

- Rising plane of nutrition for at least 4 weeks prior to implantation and this needs to continue for at least 4 weeks after implantation
- At least 8 weeks calved
- Regular heats with at least three recorded
- Known health status with all vaccinations up to date
- No urine pooling, wind sucking or endometritis
- No concurrent disease.

## Procedure

An embryo may be implanted following a natural or synchronised heat. The advantage of synchronisation is that the timing of oestrus is more controllable and so weekends can be avoided. For repeat breeders, the animal should be served to observed oestrus. The embryo is implanted 6-8 days later depending on the stage of the embryo being used. This is because it is important to match the stage of the embryo to the stage of preparation of the uterus for implantation.

On the day of implantation, the cow is examined to ensure there are none of the abnormalities described above and that there is a good corpus luteum present. If all is ok, an epidural injection is given, followed by implantation of the embryo. As these animals are problem breeders, a dose of Receptal is given 4-6 days after embryo implantation, that is, 12 days after service.

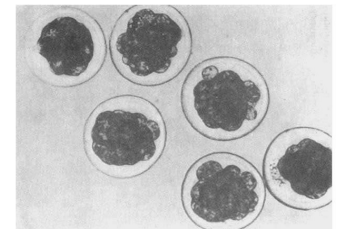


Figure 1 - embryos ready for implantation

## TB Cull Areas

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Service of the animal as well as implantation of an embryo improves the likelihood of the cow holding. This is due to an increase in the local concentration of an important protein necessary to prepare the uterus for implantation of an embryo. There is a small risk of producing twin pregnancies but it is more important to maximise the potential for any pregnancy than worry about this possibility.

On average, the success of embryo transfer is around 50%. Considering the majority of the animals being implanted are problem breeders, this is a reasonable return for the current cost of £80-100 (plus visit fee) for each embryo.

## Drug Costs, New Drugs

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Following negotiations with several drug companies, we are pleased to have been able to reduce the price of Excenel and milking cow tubes.

Zuprevo is a new addition to the range of drugs available for the treatment of respiratory disease in calves. The indications for using this drug are similar to Zactran but the duration of action is longer at 28 days for 1 dose, the dose volume is less at 1ml/45kg and the cost is lower than for Zactran. Therefore it has been decided to stock Zuprevo in preference.

Many individuals used the freeze dried colostrum when it was available a couple of years ago. An equivalent product, ImmuCol Calf, has recently been released. This is a valuable product to have as an emergency should there be no available frozen, stored or fresh colostrum available for a new born calf. The cost is £25 per dose.

There are a number of TB cull areas being organised. Each area needs at least 70% of land owners to sign up to the cull for it to be approved. The NFU is co-ordinating the process and any individuals who have yet to register their consent should call 01392 440700.



### Farm Diaries.

Apologies, Santa has not delivered our stock of pocket diaries in time for Christmas. This was due to last minute changes being made to the size and information to be included, but they will be in your December accounts in time for the New Year!

**All that remains is to wish you all  
a very merry Christmas and best  
wishes for a happy and  
productive 2012.**

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