

Early pregnancy diagnosis and confirmation

Once is good, but twice is better

It's important to know as soon as possible if your cow is in fact pregnant after being bred. Experts recommend a second check to ensure that the pregnancy is progressing as expected. But is it really necessary?

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Your veterinarian has just concluded a preventative medicine visit. Verdict: three of the four cows bred a month ago are, in fact, pregnant.

You'll have to act fast and reinseminate the open cow as soon as possible. That's the purpose of early pregnancy diagnosis: to quickly detect open cows so they can be rebred.

Your veterinarian offers to check the three pregnant cows next visit to confirm that their pregnancies are progressing normally. Confirming pregnancy, usually between 60 and 90 days of gestation, makes it possible to detect embryonic deaths.

When a pregnancy is not confirmed, you may mistakenly assume that a cow is still carrying her calf. It is not always easy to detect early embryo loss in your cows. Moreover, a cow that remains open for a prolonged period of time will cost you a lot of money.

Confirming pregnancy after early diagnosis: is it really worth it?

To answer that question, you need to consider some of the data relating to reproduction in your herd:

1) Heat detection rate:

Undetected embryo losses are very costly as they delay a possible return to service and may even lead to the cow being

pregnant cows could lose an embryo between 30 and 60 days of gestation. That rate may be even higher in some herds. Conclusion: The higher the embryonic mortality rate is in your herd, the

more important it is to confirm pregnancy status. 3) *Conception rate (breeding success):* In a herd with a lower conception rate, it will take longer to get the cows back in calf after an embryo loss. If this is the case, it's important that embryonic deaths be detected rapidly. Conclusion: The lower the

loss of \$120 per month (\$4 per DIM).

A new test now offered by Valacta makes it possible to confirm pregnancy using your milk recording (DHI) samples.

This low-cost option requires no additional effort on your part and allows you to optimize your reproduction monitoring program, in collaboration with your veterinarian.



GESTALAB

A new approach to confirming pregnancy following early diagnosis

Pregnancy can be confirmed by a veterinarian using transrectal palpation or ultrasound.

A new approach is now available: pregnancy confirmation from a DHI milk sample. This new test, called GESTALAB, detects a protein that is secreted by the placenta to indicate the presence of a foetus. The test requires no specific sampling on your part

and the results are sent to you automatically with your DHI reports.

Interpreting the GESTALAB results in your report

A POSITIVE result indicates that the cow is pregnant.

A NEGATIVE result indicates that the cow is probably not pregnant.

While most cows that test negative are indeed not pregnant, there is a margin of error. The negative predictive value of the test, although very high, is not 100 per cent. In the case of a negative result, Valacta recommends that the cow be examined by a veterinarian before any action is taken.

An "inconclusive" result may sometimes appear, indicating that GESTALAB is

unable to confirm if the cow is pregnant or open. Such a result may indicate a normal pregnancy with a delayed increase in pregnancy-associated glycoproteins (PAGs), or it may indicate embryonic loss accompanied by a drop in PAG levels. It is strongly recommended that the cows in question be retested one month later or that the animals be examined by your veterinarian.

Because GESTALAB is a tool intended to confirm pregnancy following a previous diagnosis by a veterinarian, the majority of cows tested with GESTALAB will test positive. For that reason, only a small number of cows will need to be examined by a veterinarian. GESTALAB is a tool that complements the work of your veterinarian and is an easy and economical method to confirm pregnancy status.



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culled. Because heat detection efforts typically focus on open cows, in many herds, the heat detection rate in cows previously diagnosed as pregnant by a veterinarian tends to decrease. Conclusion: The lower the heat detection rate is in your herd, the more important it is to confirm pregnancy status.

2) Embryonic mortality rate:

The embryonic mortality rate many vary greatly from one herd to the next. Experts estimate that 10 to 15 per cent of preg-

herd's conception rate, the more important it is to confirm pregnancy status.

Once is good, but is twice profitable?

Confirming pregnancy after an early diagnosis may be synonymous with added costs or appear to increase your work load—which is already quite loaded! But if you choose not to confirm pregnancy following an early diagnosis, you risk losing valuable time in rebreed-