



**Better Repro Mean more Milk- Part II**  
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Last month, we looked at three example dairy herds that have perfect, moderate or poor reproductive performance. Please refer to the table below from last month's column. Note the details of these herds and how their ability to get cows pregnant in a timely fashion had huge impacts on both milk production and feed efficiency.

	Dairy A	Dairy B	Dairy C
Avg DIM	150	180	210
Milk #	77	72	68
Intake	52.8	52.3	51.9
M:F ratio	1.46	1.38	1.30

After further analysis, we can estimate that, in the range of 14% to 20% pregnancy rates, a 1% move in pregnancy rate should result in a reduction of Days in Milk (DIM) of 10 days in a approximately one year. Using the data in the table above, this drop in DIM of 10 days, should result in approximately 1.5 lbs of additional milk. I need to note that these estimates can vary substantially based on voluntary waiting period, seasonal calving, how you DNB cows, when open cows are culled, etc. High beef prices in recent months have certainly changed how we sell cows and thus changed some of these dynamics. To be sure, if you increase your preg rate, you will get more milk down the road. So, now we have a rough estimate of how much milk that could be. Increase preg rate by 1% and your DIM will drop by approximately 10 days one year from now. Then you can expect 1.5 lbs more milk. I am sure that makes money!

In view of the potential gain from raising your pregnancy rate, what are some ideas that may help get cows pregnant sooner. Let's briefly discuss two ways to improve repro performance. A good transition program is the best place to begin. If we have transition problems, we have two main negative impacts on reproduction. First, if RPs and metritis are issues, the uterus environment will not be ideal for timely conception. Secondly, if there are issues with ketosis, milk fever and DAs, there will be extreme weight loss for sure. This rapid loss in body condition will certainly delay the time of 1<sup>st</sup> estrus and eventual conception.

A second worthy effort in the area of getting cows pregnant on time is compliance in the area of your timed breeding program. With the reality of milkers mixing cows, poor lockups with no back fence, and issues related to weather, we all know that every cow does not get the necessary shot on the correct day. One of the best ways to help this problem is to employ the technology of individual cow ID. From first hand reports by clients that have used individual cow ID, compliance to their timed or targeted breeding programs has improved greatly; and improvements in repro performance have followed.

For sure, there are many other avenues of effort to improve the repro performance on your dairy. Just pick a few and implement them. Maybe improving your transition program or implementing individual cow ID should be on that list. If you are successful, your chance of having more milk in the tank a year from now is quite good.