Solid Tips for your Best Estrus Synchronization in Beef Cattle

What is the best estrus synchronization protocol for your herd?

Experience and research does suggest that some protocols produce better results than others, but you need to decide what the best protocol is for your operation.

Ask yourself these three questions before choosing a synchronization protocol:

- How many times do I want to put the female through the squeeze chute?
- How much do I want to spend on synchronization drugs?
- What should my expectations be for results

Once you have compiled the answers to these questions you can objectively analyze which estrus synchronization protocol best fits your AI program.

How to select your candidates for synchronized AI?

Heifers:

- Should be at least 65% of mature body weight and half of them should have a reproductive tract score of ≥ 4 at six weeks before breeding.
- If you have no one to determine a reproductive tract score, you can achieve the same thing by observing your heifers for heat in the weeks and months leading up to breeding. You want to see that at least 50% of your heifers are cycling six weeks prior to breeding.

Cows:

- A Body Condition Score of ≥ 5 at calving.
- An average postpartum interval of ≥ 40 days at the beginning synchronization.
- A minimum of 21 days postpartum at the time of Eazi-Breed™ CIDR® insertion.
- A low incidence of calving difficulty.

Where is the best place to give synchronization injections and what needle size should I use?

Synchronization drugs should be given in the muscle (IM), with the exception of LUTALYSE® Hi-Con which can be administered IM or subcutaneously. It is recommended to use a 1-1/2 inch, 18-gauge needle. You should wear gloves when handling all synchronization drugs to avoid contact with your skin.

Can Eazi-Breed™ CIDR® inserts be reused?

CIDR® inserts are labeled as a one-time use devise by the manufacturer, and it is recommended that you follow this guideline. CIDR® inserts can be one of the most expensive portions of a synchronization protocol (at $11 to $13 each) and it is tempting to reduce the cost by using them a second time, but ask yourself what another AI calf is actually worth and/or the possibility of vaginal infection and you might reconsider.

Should vaccines or dewormers be given while the female is in the chute for synchronization?

Several studies have demonstrated that injection of virgin heifers with a modified live vaccine (MLV) around the time of breeding result in ovarian lesions and decreased pregnancy rates. It is recommended that you give all pre-breeding vaccinations at least 30 days prior to breeding.

We have not seen any research that suggests administering dewormers at breeding will have a negative impact on fertility, but we suggest that perform this at least 30 days prior to breeding as well. The less stress you put on females around breeding time, the better your success.

When can your cattle be moved after the insemination process?

The most critical time for embryonic development occurs between day 5 and 42. Research indicates shipping your cows during this critical time can cause a 10% decrease in pregnancy rates. The best time to move cattle is prior to insemination or days one to four post-breeding. If you can't move them within this time period, it would be best to wait until after day 45.