

Tightening calving intervals



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Why are shorter joining periods important?

To make more money

Reducing the duration of mating can:

- reduce the time required to supervise calving heifers/cows
- give cows more time to recover and maintain a 12-month cycle
- identify superior calves at weaning to recognise which heifers to retain
- tighten the herd's age structure to separate growth rate
- Make feed and grazing management easier
- To give more even batches of calves for sale



Pros of a tight calving interval

- Less age spread of calves – more marketable
- A more uniform group of replacement heifers is also more attractive to you, the producer, because they will be more likely to reach puberty at the same time and will be ready to breed when you want them bred
- lessening the time you need to spend watching them.

Beef Breeding Targets

- Each cow to produce one calf per year (not one calf every 15 to 18 months)

280 Days	55 Days	30 Days
Pregnancy	Normal time to start cycling	Two heat cycles

- A condensed calving over 6-12 weeks

Impacts on the joining period

- Bull management
- Female nutrition
- Herd management
- Parasites
- Genetic
- Reproductive Diseases

Factors to look at in bulls that can make your herd more fertile

- Consider genetic selection tools i.e Breedplan. Some fertility traits are highly heritable. Use EBVs to help with your bull selection.
- Ease of calving plays a big factor in subsequent fertility and without high levels of fertility a tight calving pattern is not possible.
- Scrotal size is strongly correlated with high semen output and female fertility.
 - Offspring reach puberty earlier, return to oestrus earlier and have shorter days to calving

Check scrotal size of bull is above industry standards for British-bred bulls¹²

Bulls aged 18 months: >32 cm

Bulls aged 24 months: >34 cm

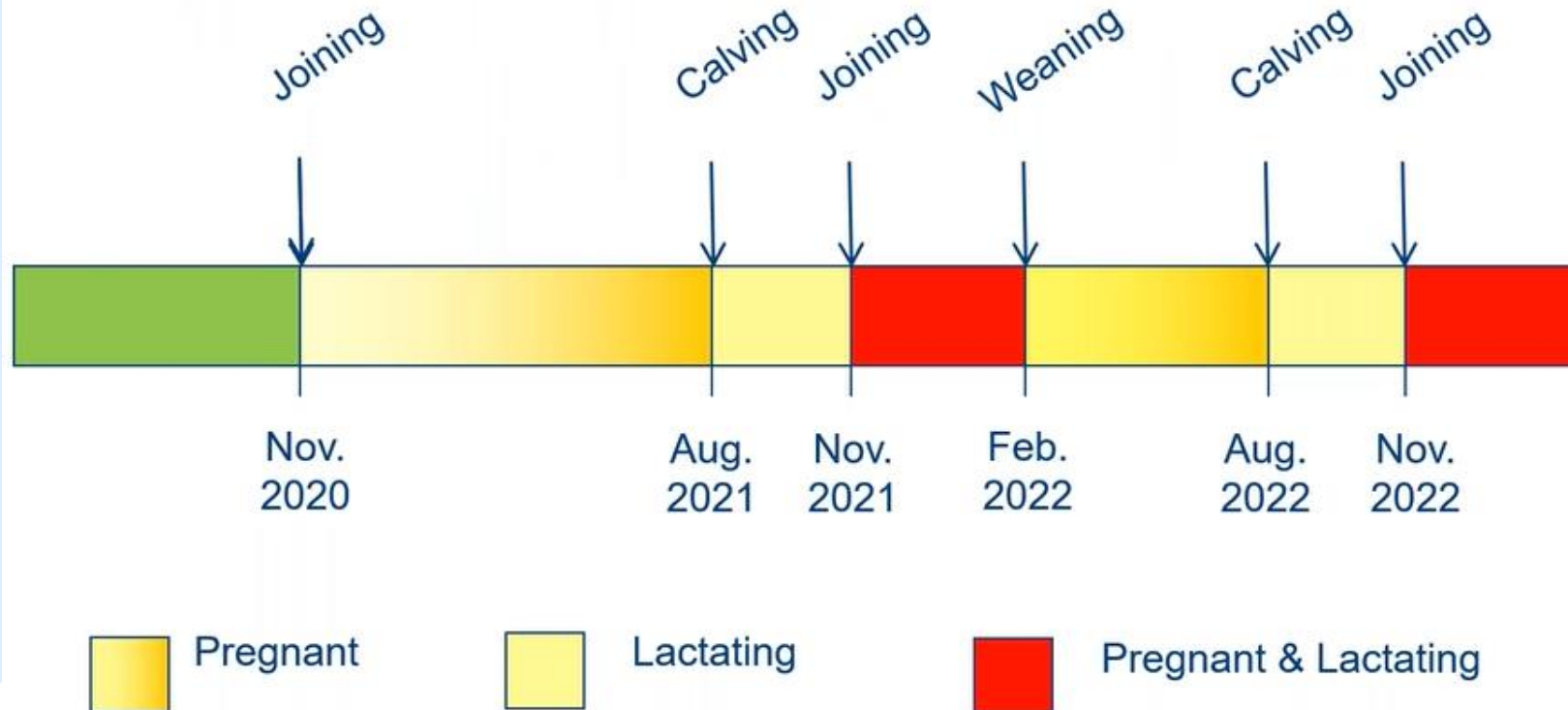


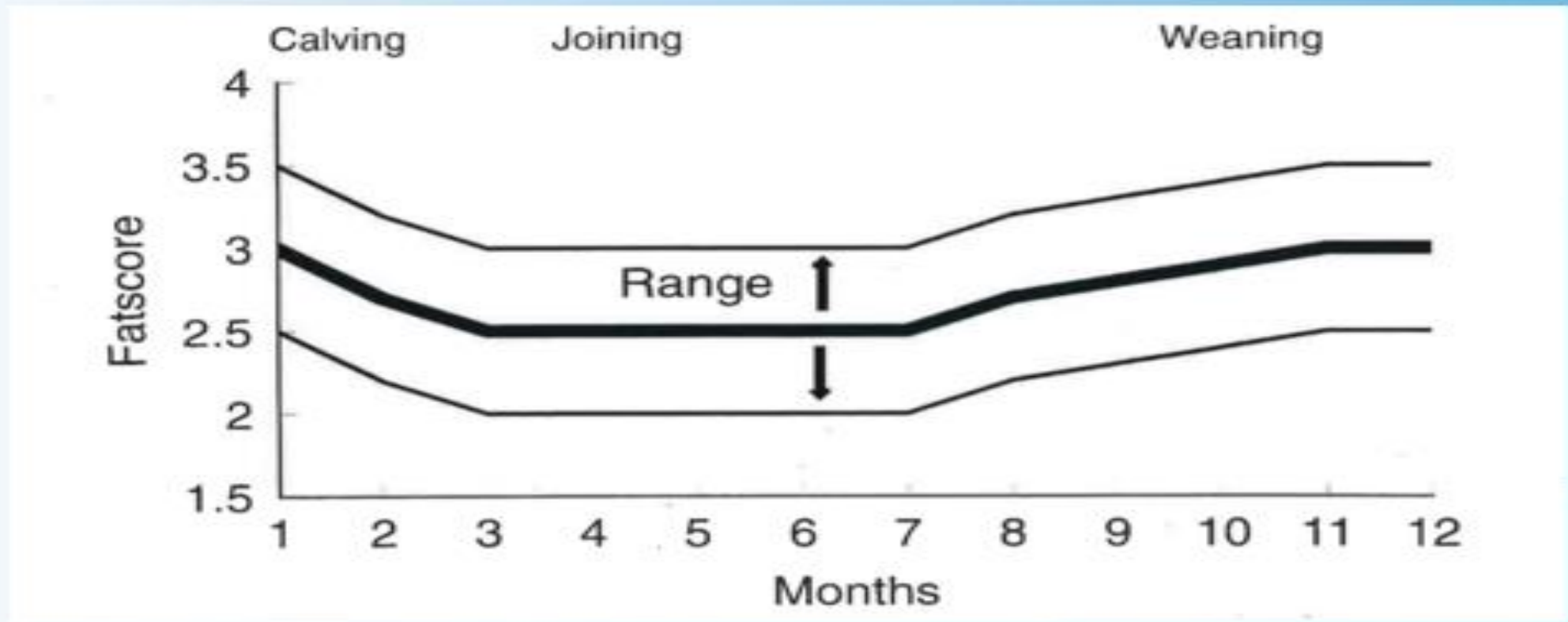
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- need to be fit not fat so for spring calvers leaving the bulls out overwinter with a bit of mouldy hay will often leave them too little time to recover before their work begins.
- Turning a fat young bull out straight from the sales often results in a rapid loss of condition and the bull failing to work
- Get your Veterinary Surgeon to check the fertility of your bulls.

Fat Score at Calving	Days after calving % on heat		
	50 Day	70 Days	90 Days
1 to 2	34	55	66
3 to 4	45	79	91
4 to 5	42	96	100

A Heifer's Future







Hip bones are faintly visible, ribs are usually not visible. Tail head is not recessed. Body outline is almost smooth.

Wagga Wagga Feed Quality Service

Specimen Type: Forage

			0001
			May Frosted Lovegrass
Results	Units	LOR	Lovegrass
Dry Matter	%	0.5	71.8
Moisture	%	0.5	28.2
Neutral Detergent Fibre (NIR)	%	10	90
Acid Detergent Fibre (NIR)	%	4	54
*Water Soluble Carbohydrate (NIR)	%	4.0	<4.0
Crude Protein (NIR)	%	2.0	<2.0
Inorganic Ash (NIR)	%	3	4
Organic Matter (NIR)	%	75	96
DMD (NIR)	%	39	<39
DOMD (NIR)	%	38	39
*AFIA Grade			NO GRADE
Metabolisable Energy (NIR)	MJ/kg DM	4.3	4.8

1st conception opportunity

2nd conception opportunity

21 day oestrus cycle

21 day oestrus cycle

6 week mating period (42 days)



Show the gate to females from the herd that do not
conceive in the first 2 cycles



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Pregnancy Testing

Early pregnancy testing (6-7 weeks after bull removal) creates marketing and management options

Pregnancy testing enables ageing of foetuses and tightening of joining period. Foetal aging down to approx. 6-7 weeks.

Early pregnant females can be retained

Late pregnant females can be sold as "preg-tested in-calf"

Remember: Investigate unacceptably low pregnancy rates – rule out bull problems or infectious reproductive diseases (e.g. vibriosis, leptospirosis, pestivirus – vaccines available)



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Ways to shorten the joining period

Reducing the joining period by 1-2 weeks/year in good conditions.
May take several years but your business will benefit

Foetal aging and selling PTIC heifers/cows that fall out of joining period

If buying in PTIC heifers ask for a animal health statement – Pesti

Use of hormones to stimulate oestrus. 35 days post calving min.

Early weaning

Temporally calf removal



Ways to shorten the joining period

Temporally calf removal

Thirty to 80 percent of females receiving 48-hour calf removal will resume their estrous cycles within approximately 20 days, depending on the degree of nutritional stress and the ages of the female and her Calf

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Conclusion

- Cows and heifers need to be at the right fat score at the right time
- Avoid having cattle live off fat reserves and drop below fat score 2.5
- Oestrogen hormones can be used in some situation heat
- Temporally removal of calf may have other impacts
- Know your market options

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