

Case Study: Greg Rogers

Laboratory tests for pregnancy diagnosis in dairy cows

About Greg

Greg Rogers has been share farming at Katunga for 18 months, having worked as a farm manager in the region previously. He milks 260 cows, mainly Friesians, with a few Jerseys.



Greg Rogers, setting up for herd testing

The first time Greg dried off his herd, a couple of cows that had been identified as pregnant when the vet did the early pregnancy test at the end of joining were found to be empty. These cows would have to be sold. Greg kept one of the better cows which was later mated by the bull, but she was out of the herd for about 12 months, costing him a year's lost production. When Greg read an article in his herd improvement company's newsletter about IDEXX milk pregnancy testing he phoned the company to find out more and decided to give it a try.

Greg uses AI for 7 weeks and the bull for another 5 weeks. Greg likes to get the vet out for early pregnancy testing about 8-10 weeks after the bull is finished. He says nothing beats the fact a vet can put an arm inside a cow and age the pregnancy. The vet can also tell if the cow has cysts and discuss then and there any decisions that need to be made about the cow. Greg has also found that the vet picks up other things, so he likes the vet to look over the herd once a year.

But now Greg also uses the milk pregnancy test at drying off to double-check his cows are still pregnant. He uses the test on about 30-40 cows, mainly the last few cows that have been joined and any other suspect cows such as those producing large volumes of milk near drying off. He likes having this backup to confirm what the vet finds and what is in his records. This way, he only dries off pregnant cows and can continue to milk the empties as carry overs. Using the test Greg has identified, up to 2 non-pregnant cows that he had thought were pregnant. The cost of the test is weighed against the potential loss of those cows and their production.

Greg says that he finds this system very easy and cheap, at around \$4.50 per sample. On balance, Greg says 'The test is good for what I do: it's a good backup tool. It's easy, quick and cost-effective.'



Herd testing equipment



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