



Background

Improving the health, fertility and longevity of dairy herds is a multifaceted task with far-reaching benefits. As well as improving animal welfare, it can significantly increase farmers' incomes and reduce the negative environmental impacts of dairy farming. Described below is a comprehensive strategy to achieve these goals.

How does the strategy work?

Health and disease management:

- Establish a routine health monitoring system, including regular visits by veterinarians, to allow early detection and management of health problems.
- Establish preventive schedules and care programmes to reduce the incidence of common diseases.
- Ensure that dairy cattle receive a balanced and nutritious diet to support overall health.

Reproductive health and fertility:

- Implement a well-managed breeding program, including artificial insemination, to improve health and fertility.
- Use technologies to detect estrus and to monitor estrus cycles.
- Regularly assess herd fertility and adjust breeding strategies as necessary.

Longevity and welfare:

- Provide spacious and well-ventilated housing.
- Provide a comfortable lying surface and space for all cows to lie down at the same time.
- Develop feeding management practices that take into account age specific needs and ensure minimal competition at the feed manger.
- Implement a selective culling strategy based on health.

Integrate data and technology:

- Use digital tools and software to collect and analyze data on each cow's health, reproductive history and performance.
- Incorporate artificial intelligence and machine learning algorithms to predict health and fertility problems and take proactive action.

Education and training:

- Provide staff with educational programs and workshops on best practices for herd health, fertility management and longevity.
- Seek veterinary and agricultural experts for advice and support.

Environmental sustainability:

- Ensure the efficient use of resources, including water, energy and feed, to minimize environmental impact.
- Composting or anaerobic digestion to reduce pollution.

By implementing this comprehensive strategy, dairy farmers can improve the health, fertility and longevity of their dairy cows, leading to higher incomes and less negative environmental impacts. It promotes a sustainable and profitable dairy industry that benefits both farmers and the environment.

Positive features

- Increased profitability due to higher milk yields, lower veterinary costs and higher incomes.
- More efficient use of resources, including feed, water and energy, which can reduce production costs and environmental impact.
- The health and welfare of dairy cows is prioritised, improving their quality of life and animal welfare standards.
- Better fertility management ensures a more consistent and reliable milk supply, which is very important for dairy companies and their customers.
- The implementation of sustainable farming practices contributes to the reduction of negative environmental impacts, making dairy farming more sustainable.

Be careful, especially on these points:

- Every dairy farming operation is unique! It is important to tailor the strategy to the farm's specific circumstances and objectives.
- Accurate and reliable data collection and management are essential for informed decision making and effective monitoring.
- Ensure continuous education and training to both farmers and farm staff so that they have the necessary knowledge and skills to implement the strategy properly.
- Comply with local, regional and national environmental regulations and standards related to dairy farming to avoid legal problems.

Assessment of method



Quote of the farmer:

"Investing in our herd's health isn't just good for our cows; it's good for our bottom line and our environment. It's a win-win for us and our farm's future."