

Technical efficiency



Environment, animal welfare, society friendly

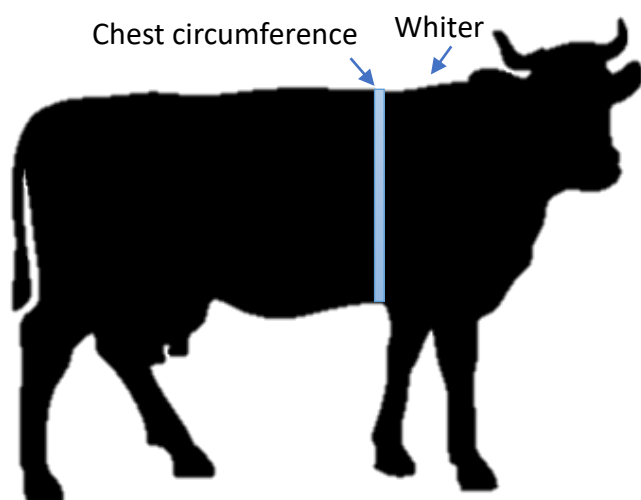


Background

A first calving between 23 and 25 months of age maximizes the profitability of the business, but the heifer must have sufficient conformation to reach this objective without danger. Sustained, controlled growth from birth is therefore necessary to ensure the harmonious development of the future dairy cow, without compromising her future production capacity.

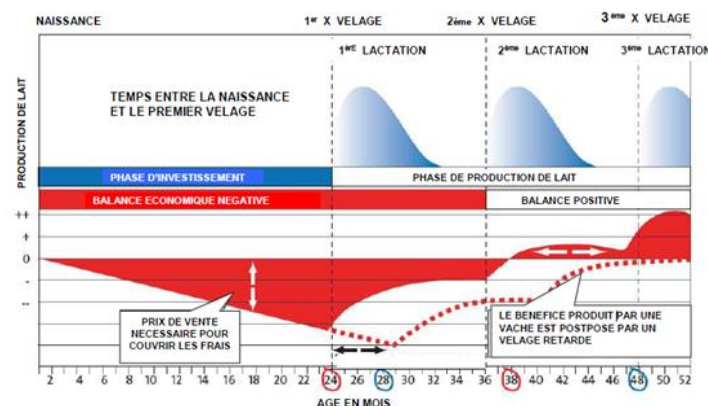
How does the strategy work?

- ❖ Heifers' growth
 - From 0 to 6 months : 900-1100g/d : any delay in growth cannot be resorbed
 - From 7 to 12 months : 800g/d max to avoid fattening of mammary gland
- ❖ Two methods to follow the heifers growth:
 - Animal weighing
 - Chest circumference measurement and online tool: link between chest circumference and body weight



Positive features

- Reduction of the unproductive live of the dairy cow
- Reduction of feed cost
- Reduction of the environmental impact
- Reduction of heifers for same renewal rate



source : Institut Babcock

Be careful, especially on these points

- Feeding
 - Quick colostrum distribution (max 3 hours before calving)
 - Milking distribution
 - Good quality forage
- Housing
 - Control of temperature
 - Control of windy condition
 - Control of hygrometry
- Well behind
 - Control of strong worms

Equipment involved? Investment?

Two technics to follow the heifer's growth

- ❖ weighing machine :
 - Price
 - Automatic measurement
 - To place in frequent passage as example near the water trough
- ❖ Chest circumference with measuring tape :
 - cheap
 - need to immobilize animals during measurement
 - frequency : best once each month, at least each 3 months

Assessment of method



Quote of the farmer:

"I'm convinced that monitoring young stock growth makes an important contribution to the profitability of my farm"

Dirk Vandecandelaere (Be-FI)