



LibertyGenetics
PROVING THE BEST VALUE

TEAM TALK

SEPTEMBER 2011



From the General Manager's Desk

Dear clients, Bull Breeders and Industry Friends,

After a wet cold start to calving, the recent mild weather has boosted morale, and strong cow cycling activity has been reported throughout the country, so we do anticipate a busy AB season.

Liberty has also had it's challenges over the last few months, due to legal action by LIC and a temporary injunction that was placed on a few members of our Friesian and Crossbred bull teams.

The Liberty Genetics board was conscious of cost and risk, and there was a round of negotiation but it was not possible to find a mutually acceptable resolution. The main hearing is on the 3rd October, but the dispute has expanded to the "reasonableness" of LIC conditions and service rules, in particular Clause 62 & 63. **We consider that these rules are a restraint of trade that compromises industry genetic gain, specifically targeting only the smaller competitors and breeders.** There is strong evidence that exchange of genetics across companies has contributed to "landmark" sires that have boosted genetic gain, and this cross-fertilisation should not be prevented for proven bulls.

In the interim, to comply with the injunction we have added some proven bulls to the team with a small decrease in the team BW averages. The early orders have been dispatched, but once the court decision is known around Oct 14th, we hope that we can add the disputed bulls back into the semen distribution mix. Where necessary we will get top up deliveries to you at no extra cost.

There is a broad base of support for Liberty Genetics on this issue, from breeders, industry organisations and other AB companies. We encourage you to email or call us to register your concern and support. Email me at dhayman@libertygenetics.co.nz, or phone us at 0508 454 237. Thank you for supporting us in standing up for healthy competition in the AB industry.

Yours faithfully

Dave Hayman

Court Showdown Early October – Bulls Ready to Come Out of "Sin Bin"

Liberty Genetics and the bull owners are optimistic that the top Friesian and Crossbred bulls will be cleared to play in the nick of time for the current mating season. Some of the Liberty Friesian and Crossbred bulls were given a "yellow card" and sent to the side lines after a court hearing in August. However, this was a temporary ruling while the sides prepare for the substantaive court case.

In the dispute LIC claims that it should have rights where farmers have bred top bulls with some LIC semen purchased from third parties in Australia with no conditions or restraints. The bull owners and Liberty Genetics argue that the IP claim does not apply to the disputed bulls, as the semen they were sired from was not supplied under LIC Conditions and Service Rules. They also argue that the LIC Conditions and Service Rules unreasonably constrain farmers and competitors to LIC. The result is that genetic gain in the industry is compromised, and interested farmers cannot fully benefit from their efforts and investment to breed top stock.

The restraint discourages investment in New Zealand genetics by bull breeders and other AB companies.

The claim is made that the IP protection is required to protect investment in sire development, but LIC has granted a waiver to CRV Ambreed, it's largest competitor. The waiver allows CRV to access the LIC IP, but Liberty Genetics and other smaller competitors are excluded, when LIC has supplied the semen to the farmer. In this case, the disputed bulls were bred from LIC semen sold offshore where it is sold with no conditions, and reimported and supplied to the bull owners via third parties.'

The inequity of the IP rules (clauses 62 & 63) has been hotly debated in the AB industry over the last 10 years, including several complaints to the Commerce Commission.



Increase Your Farm Conception Rate and Reap the Rewards

AB start dates are just around the corner. Congratulations to Farmers who improved their 4 week conception rate on last season as you will be enjoying: an increase in daily milksolids, increased heifer calf replacements and now increased observed reproduction cycling activity in your herd.

'The economic loss due to poor reproduction performance is substantial. Whereas industry targets for the 6-week in-calf rate and empty rate are 78% and 6%, respectively, common performance levels are closer to 65% and 15% for a 12 week mating period in the South Island. From the I-calf Economic Benefit Model, the gap (13% and 9%) represent a \$103,000 profit reduction per annum for an average size 723- cow herd in Canterbury; or a per annum combined loss of \$172 million for the Canterbury, Otago and Southland regions.' (Burke, 2010 LUDF Trial, pg4, para.3)

There are a number of reason why a poorer conception rate is obtained and the challenge is to identify the factors responsible for the problem. Only then can management changes be made to improve reproductive efficiency and herd profitability.

- **Calving patterns** – a spread-out calving pattern dictates AB submission rates due to cows calved less than 50 days before the start of AB.
- **Interval from calving to breeding** – conception rates are lower in cows that are bred less than 50 days from calving.
- **Inaccurate estrous detection** – If the animal is not standing the conception percentage decreases as they are inseminated too early. The key to success is developing an accurate estrous detection program that allows accurate prediction of when the cow started to stand. (70% of cows start cycling between 1- 3 am)
- **Timing of tech service** – ovulation happens 24 to 30 hours after the animal first stands to be mounted. Sperm cells remain live in the cow's reproduction tract for 18-24 hours. The fertile life

of an egg is 10-12 hours. Optimum insemination time is 10 to 20 hours after first standing heat. (between 11am to 1pm)

- **Semen Quality** – Owner-inseminators should review on-farm storage conditions, handling procedures and thawing techniques. Short cuts and bad habits can lower its fertility. Farmers who use AB techs have fewer problems as the technicians are assessed on all the above practices.
- **Insemination technique** – Correct semen placement is critical.
- **Bull fertility** – The fertility of bulls can vary by 10% in an AB bull team. The fertility variance with Natural Mating bulls is greater so more bulls are needed. (rule of thumb is: 1 bull to every 27 cows)
- **Level of milk production and nutrition** – Excellent nutritional and reproduction management may effectively compensate for any negative effect that high milk production has on reproduction. (cows must be on a rising feed plane)
- **Age** – Conception rates are also lower in 3 year olds and in 9+ year old cows. Both these groups are losing teeth. Yearlings and first calvers conception rates are 10% higher.
- **Genetics** – Fertility traits have a very low heritability therefore farmers should continue to give emphasis to selecting for production performance in order to maximise profit. Improved reproduction and nutritional management will ensure that reproduction performance is not impaired in high producing cows. Genetic selection for improved fertility is a long slow process.

Troubleshooting conception rate problems in dairy herds is not an easy mission because there are numerous potential problem areas. The situation is made worse by the fact that in most herds, low conception rate is not due to a major problem in one area, but rather to minor problems in several areas. But relatively small changes in the efficiencies of individual factors can have a major impact on overall conception rate. Achieving and maintaining high conception rates require attention to detail and doing many little things right all the time.



HOT OFF THE PRESS

September AEU run identifies Fast Starters

2009 Team Members	BW 17/9/2011	BW 13/8/2011	Positive move	Breed
308819 - Noble	201	176	25	Jersey
308808 - Icon	172	154	18	Jersey
308811 - Entrepreneur	158	141	17	Jersey
108806 - Raid	173	161	12	Friesian
108812 - Come by Fire	171	156	15	Friesian
108800 - Escalade	165	149	16	Friesian

Get your order in today for the 2011 high genetic merit team and be in early to use these new rising stars Call 0508 454 237



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Sexed Semen increases your heifer calf ratio

- Take advantage of the national dairy growth and the strong export markets
- Increase your spring 2012 cash flow by inseminating your yearlings
- Increase your herd genetic gain with replacements from your highest BW animals

**LG75X (Sexed Semen)
available from \$35 to \$38**

Liberty Genetics – Best value company for conventional and sexed semen products

NZ farmer owned Driving down AB costs!

WANTED

4 day old recorded Friesian (F12+) heifer calves or 90kg recorded weaner Friesian (F12+) heifer calves.

RECORD HIGH PRICES

LG75x Sexed Semen is all about value

Liberty Genetics has been involved with Sexed Semen trial work over the last two years. The project sourced and inseminated groups of yearling's through-out NZ. Yearlings were used due to their higher fertility and therefore dairy herd conception rates were not jeopardised. Research by other AB companies on Sexed Semen conception rates, confirms that the older the animal is the lower the conception rate.

We can conclude through the yearling Sexed Semen insemination trial that:

- PG synchrony has a 10% higher conception rate over Cidr synchrony programs

- Conception rates averaged 12% lower than non-sexed semen

The normal conception rate is in the range 45 to 55% with a PG synchrony program, and Liberty's sexed semen ratio is 75+% heifer calves. The groups of yearlings that achieved a 55% conception rate had two main factors,

1. Animals were well grown and on rising feed plan,
2. PG synchronisation programs were used.

So if you are looking to increase your herd numbers, capitalize on the strong export markets and the internal dairy growth then consider inseminating your yearlings with Sexed Semen.



Increase Heat Detection Confidence With **ESTRUS ALERT™**!

Dairy Herd owners will be impressed with the latest low cost innovation from Liberty Genetics. ESTRUS ALERT™ heat detector patches are significantly cheaper than comparable products and they come with clean, easy to apply aerosol adhesive. This product should be a key component in your mating plan.



- Suitable to apply on both cows and yearlings
- Position the patch midway on the tail head
- Easy to read
- Aerosol glue is provided with the patches. (eliminates messy substitutes like tail paint and liquid glue)
- Three colours to choose from

The Estrus Alert Detector Aid helps staff to mate cows at the correct time to maximise fertility. The use of different colours will help recognise first or second matings.

A limited quantity has been imported for this season so order today

We have tried a variety of heat detection aids, but Estrus Alert™ is our first choice for convenience and accuracy

James Casey, Recipient Herd
Manager for Animal Breeding Services Ltd

Price: \$1.50 per patch for first 1,000
\$1.35 for patches ordered above 1,000
(GST excl.)

Plus Postage and Packaging – order from: office@libertygenetics.co.nz or ph 0508 454 237

Leonard's Large Herd Mating Plan

Dairy farming first, followed by a career as a breeding consultant, gives me an understanding of the mating period and the stress and cost that occur on farm. Over the years the herd size has got bigger but managing reproduction in large herds has got harder.

Currently I manage the Sales and Technician service for Liberty Genetics, and over the years I have heard from techs that are number of cows that get inseminated daily aren't on heat and this is more prevalent in large herds. We have also seen over the years farmers choosing not to use intervention on their non-cyclers due to cost. Identify the non-cyclers in your herd, is as important as identifying the cows that are cycling.

So, I have come up with a mating plan that will;

- Reduce farm stress
- Improve farm conception rates
- Decrease the amount of double matings (two matings within 10 day period)
- Reduce the cost of AB
- AND lower your empty rate percentage

Steps

1. 10 days before the start of AB, apply same coloured (red) Estrus Alerts heat detectors (no recording of cow numbers required)
2. The day before AB draft all the cycled animals out (This is Mob 2). Apply different coloured Estrus Alerts. (green or blue)
3. Mob 1 has the remainder cows.
4. Day 1 of AB planned start date, all cycling cows will be in Mob 1. Draft these cows out daily for tech insemination

and apply green Estrus Alerts after cows have finished their heat. (if new Alert has been rubbed, managers can identify that the cow was on heat the day before and therefore not present animal for insemination again if she is not on)

5. Cows in Mob 1 that have not cycled in the first 10 days are your none-cyclers (get vet to check these or scan ovaries to check for abnormalities)
- OR** PG inject Mob 1 and inseminate majority on days 3, 4, 5 and 6. Cows that have not showed a heat after a PG injection are your non-cyclers.
6. On Day 6 you will start to see cows cycle in Mob 2, draft these for insemination. By Day 10 the majority of cows cycling will be in Mob 2. (there should be no non-cyclers in Mob 2)
7. On week 4 of your AB plan, the cows that will return are in Mob 1. If you plan to only do 4 weeks AB, you can run bulls in Mob 2 as these cows will not return till Week 5.
8. Apply blue Estru\$ Alerts after the animals second insemination.

This program uses two to three different heat detection colours; firstly red followed by green or blue. The change of colours identifies the cows that are on their second or third heat.

Reproduction is an expensive exercise if a plan is not in place with: increased AB costs due to inseminating cows that are not on heat, missed matings (reflecting in lost days in milk), higher empty rates due to non-cyclers not being identified early and decreased number of heifer calf replacements.

Adopt the plan & enjoy your herds mating season in 2011

Elizabeth Leonard

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