

CALVING INDUCTION GUIDELINES

Calving induction has some very important animal welfare considerations

- Corticosteroids are the main drugs used to induce calving. These drugs reduce immune responses in cattle, and therefore some cows may develop acute, severe infections.
- Induced cows have a higher incidence of retained foetal membranes.
- Induced cows may have a higher incidence of photosensitisation.
- Calves born to induced cows have a lower than normal survival rate and are more likely to be born weak.
- Malpresentations of small calves may result in calving difficulties.

Selection of Cows for Induction:

- Only cows in good health and body condition. Cows with the following conditions would not usually be suitable for inducing - thin (<4 CS), scouring, evidence of previous photosensitisation, mastitis or other infections.
- We do not normally recommend inducing first calf heifers or older cows.
- Adequate dry period - at least 6 weeks.
- Six months or greater in calf.

Procedure:

- All induction candidates should be pregnancy tested at the time of induction. Previous and current history which may have an impact on the induction programme to be assessed.
- If appropriate, an induction drug will be administered at the time of the first visit.
- A second visit will be arranged (usually for about 14 days later) to assess the response to the first treatment. Follow-up treatment with either a corticosteroid or prostaglandin will be given.
- If cows respond well before the 14 days have elapsed seek our advice. We may decide to revisit earlier.

Follow-up Care:

- Provide sheltered paddocks and observe regularly.
- Reduce green pasture intake and supplement with hay and causmag/anionic salts at recommended levels to reduce the incidence of metabolic disease.
- Have appropriate milk fever treatments on hand. Consider or discuss with us, the use of milk fever preventatives eg. Vit. D3, calol.
- Seek immediate veterinary advice or attention if illness is evident.

- Be alert to cows passing their membranes but not calving. If in doubt, check!
- If induced cows receive prostaglandin (PG) and do not calve within 48 hours, they should be manually checked.
- Precalving milking may be required in some engorged cows to prevent teat damage and/or predisposition to mastitis.

Care of Induced Calves:

- Calves must not be allowed to suffer.
- Calves which are unable to stand, walk or suckle, or are incapacitated in any way should be euthanased promptly in a humane manner. Carcasses should be disposed of quickly and hygienically.
- In some instances, induced calves may be reared. Particular attention should be paid to colostrum intake, warmth and shelter.

Withholding Period:

- Trimedexil*

Milk withholding	10 milkings
Meat withholding	7 days from the day of the last injection - applies to the cow and the calf
- Prostaglandin**

Milk withholding	NIL
Meat withholding	3 days meat withholding from the day of injection -applies to the cow and the calf.

* Trimedexil is the drug used for the first and second induction

** Prostaglandin is the drug use as the 48 hour needle