



## GETTING THE MOST OUT OF AN AI PROGRAM

Artificial Insemination (AI) programs can be a good way to fast track genetic improvement in your herd. This is because superior and proven genetics can be sourced which may not be available or accessible otherwise. One bull's genetics can also be used over hundreds of cows.

Programs however require preparation and planning and producers who consistently achieve good results are those who are well prepared and whose cattle are in good health and condition.

The following tips are designed to help maximise the success of your AI program.



### 3+ MONTHS PRIOR TO PROGRAM

#### Ensure:

- ▶ You have a clear breeding objective for the season/s ahead and realistic expectations
  - ▶ Identify which females you will use –
    - ▶ Ensure yearling heifers are sufficiently mature
    - ▶ Ensure first calvers are in BCS 3+ at calving
    - ▶ Ensure cows are minimum 60 days post calving
    - ▶ Ensure ALL females are not pregnant to rogue bulls
  - ▶ Cattle are on a rising plane of nutrition to be in at least BCS 3 at AI; supplement if necessary
  - ▶ Cattle have been vaccinated against diseases that cause reproductive loss. Most importantly Pestivirus and Leptospirosis and possibly Vibrio.
- ▶ Identify resources needed eg labour, semen, synchronisation hormones and equipment.
- ▶ Book an experienced cattle vet or AI technician if you are not experienced yourself.

A list of service providers can be found at [www.repro360.com.au/about/directory](http://www.repro360.com.au/about/directory)



### 2 MONTHS PRIOR TO PROGRAM

- ▶ Book in program with your vet or AI technician.
- ▶ Choose genetics. If semen is to be sourced externally, organise with your provider.
- ▶ If semen is average to low in price, FTAI generally results in more pregnancies and is often more cost effective to produce AI calves.
- ▶ If semen is expensive or rare consider the following to get the best value out of every semen straw used:
  - ▶ extra measures such as aided heat detection
  - ▶ ultrasound scan at AI to ensure the cow has responded adequately to the program
- ▶ Check yards are in good order with a crush and vetbox.



### 1 MONTH PRIOR TO PROGRAM

- ▶ Finalise protocol/s including any re-synchronisation.
  - ▶ Ensure key dates are in your calendar
  - ▶ Set phone reminders
- ▶ Order synchronisation hormones, necessary needles and syringes and accessories (gloves, lubricant, paper towel etc if needed).
- ▶ Have a plan to ensure selected semen is on-farm before synchronisation starts.



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ACHIEVE MORE TOGETHER

- ▶ Check all females are empty (pregnancies generally abort from the program hormones & these cows cannot be bred to AI resulting in a major reduction in AI program success rate and a setback in your herd's fertility).
- ▶ Ensure all bulls are secure, or have a plan to secure your females during synchronisation.
- ▶ Check nutrition (quality and quantity) – supplement if required.



### 1 WEEK PRIOR TO PROGRAM

- ▶ Ensure feed and water set up in or near yards and holding paddocks are secure.
- ▶ Ensure synchronisation hormones have arrived on site and adhere to cold chain storage as required.
- ▶ Ensure semen will arrive on site in a timely manner, if it is not already there.



### TIME OF AI

- ▶ Ensure the stock handling team understand the job and the program.
- ▶ If using heat detection, dedicate the necessary time to watch females (min 45 mins, twice daily and not during heat of the day).
- ▶ Maintain cold chain – important to keep hormones in fridge/esky with ice pack and out of direct sunlight until ready to use and during use. In the hotter months, even room temperature hormones could be at risk.
- ▶ Use utmost hygiene when inserting devices, change needles regularly.
- ▶ Look after your cattle – ensure good quality hay, clean water and ideally shade are available. Energy is key for reproductive performance.



### POST AI

- ▶ Put into place your re-synchrony program if this is the path chosen.
- ▶ Make sure bulls are kept well clear for first 10 days. Put the mop up bulls in from 10 days after AI (if not re-synchronising), calculate no. needed carefully and make sure they have passed a Bull Examination).
- ▶ Ensure cattle are kept on a rising plane of nutrition – target BCS 3.5+ at calving.
- ▶ Book in your pregnancy diagnosis as early as 6 weeks and up to 12 weeks to ensure you can differentiate conceptions to AI or to the bull.