



Fiji DAIRYNOTE 1.3 – Calf and Heifer Rearing: Weaning to Mating

Good Practice Guide for Fiji Dairy Farmers

Weaning to Mating

- All young stock should be weighed regularly and kept in small mobs of similar size and weight
- Regular de-worming is essential – alternate drenches every two months so that no resistance to specific types of drench is developed
- Take regular veterinary advice – be aware of any external parasites, ticks, lice etc. and treat immediately
- Seek veterinary advice on any vaccinations that might be necessary
- Well grown heifers should be ready to be mated at 15 to 18 months of age by which time they should weight 270 to 290 kilograms

Target liveweights

		Youngstock target liveweights-kg LWT				
		age in months				
		3	6	9	15	22
Mature Liveweight	Kg	% of mature Liveweight				
		20%	30%	40%	60%	90%
Jersey	350	70	105	140	210	315
Jersey	400	80	120	160	240	360
J xF	450	90	135	180	270	405
Friesian	500	100	150	200	300	450
Friesian	550	110	165	220	330	495

Weight bands are a very easy way to measure stock girth and therefore weight. They are cheap and readily available.

Estimating liveweights

Girth (metres)		0.85-0.87	1-1.05	1.08	1.12	1.19	1.25	1.31
Estimated body weight		50	100	120	140	160	180	200
Girth (metres)	1.36	1.41	1.45	1.48	1.5	1.54	1.59	1.62
Estimated body weight	220	240	260	270	280	300	320	340

Heifers fed well, with high protein supplements from birth can achieve mating weights at 15-18 months of age. Spending money on CMR and calf grower will mean mating, calving and milk production can occur 1-2 years earlier than typical. A cow producing 5L/day for 240 days will earn you around \$1000 income in that extra year, more than offsetting the cost of 1.5- 2 bags CMR and 5bags calf grower per calf needed to achieve these weights.