

Do High Producers have lower reproductive performance?

There is no simple answer, as reproduction is a complex system affected by multiple management and physiological mechanisms. One theory that has come from research in the USA looks at the level of hormones in the blood. High producing cows have higher dry matter intakes (DMI) and as a result produce more milk. Oestrogen and progesterone are steroid hormones critical to reproduction, with the liver being the major site of steroid metabolism. In lactating cows, liver blood flow and the metabolic clearance rate of progesterone increased soon after feeding and this increase persisted longer at higher DMI. It was suggested that the decrease in circulating levels of hormones could have a significant effect on reproduction in high producing cows with high DMI. What is probably most common in high producing cows are shorter heats (e.g. 1-2 hours). If you have a high-input, or high producing herd then we would advise using heat detection devices such as Kamars, or teaser bulls, to increase the chance of detecting heats in your herd.