

World Hereford Conference, Copenhagen 2008

Maximising Suckler Cow Profitability Using British Native Breeds

A Nuffield Farming Scholarship Trust Report

by

Robert Parker

Sponsored by

The Hereford Cattle Society

2006



The Search for the Perfect Cow

- Commercial Production
- Availability of Replacements
- Monitor Farm
- Nuffield Scholarship



The UK Beef Cow

- By-Product of the Dairy Industry
- Conception Rates in Dairy Herds as low as 40%
- 3.6 Calvings per Lifetime
- 410 day Calving interval
- Biosecurity
- Availability

Scottish Herd Performance

	Rearer Finisher Enterprises		
	Bottom	Average	Top
Born Alive / 100 Cows	91	92	95
Reared / 100 Cows	88	90	94
Net Margin (Euros)	(-)401	(-)208	(-)53

Source: QMS 2007



Liniers Cattle Market, Buenos Aires.



Lunch in Montevideo

World Production Systems

- Native Breeds Only
- Smaller Frame Size
- Forage Based Diets
- Intensive in Feedlot
- Calving at 2 Years
- One Calf per Cow per Year



“Production is Vanity, Profit is Sanity”



Frederico Mocerrea, G. Villegas, Argentina

PROFIT

PROFIT



**Easy
Calving**

PROFIT



**Easy
Calving**



**More
Calves**

PROFIT



**Easy
Calving**



**More
Calves**



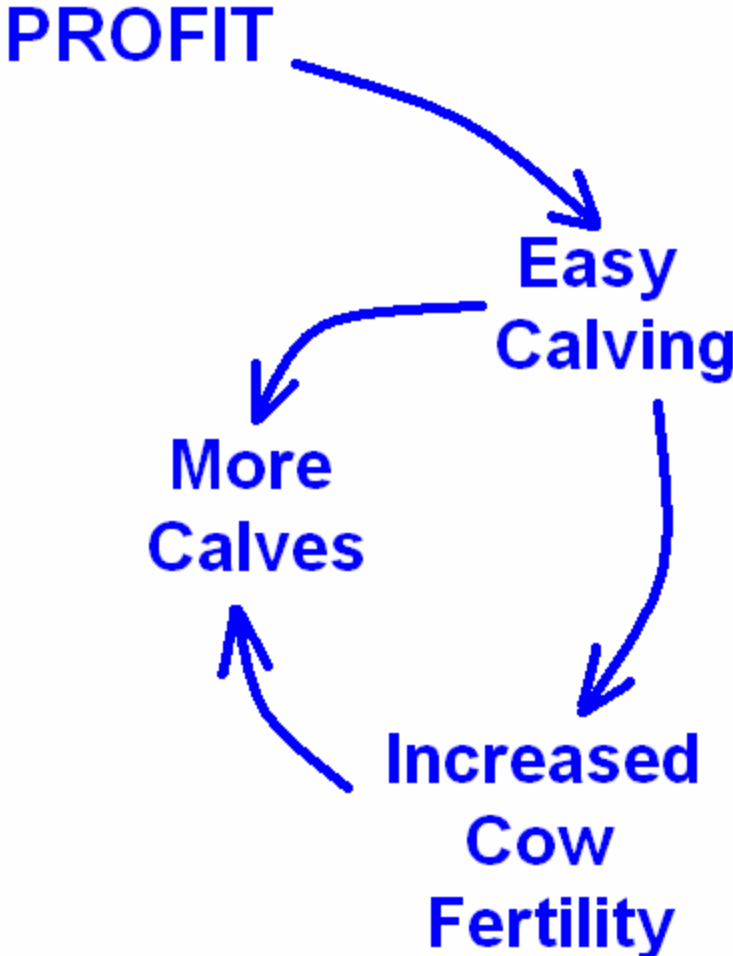
**Increased
Cow
Fertility**

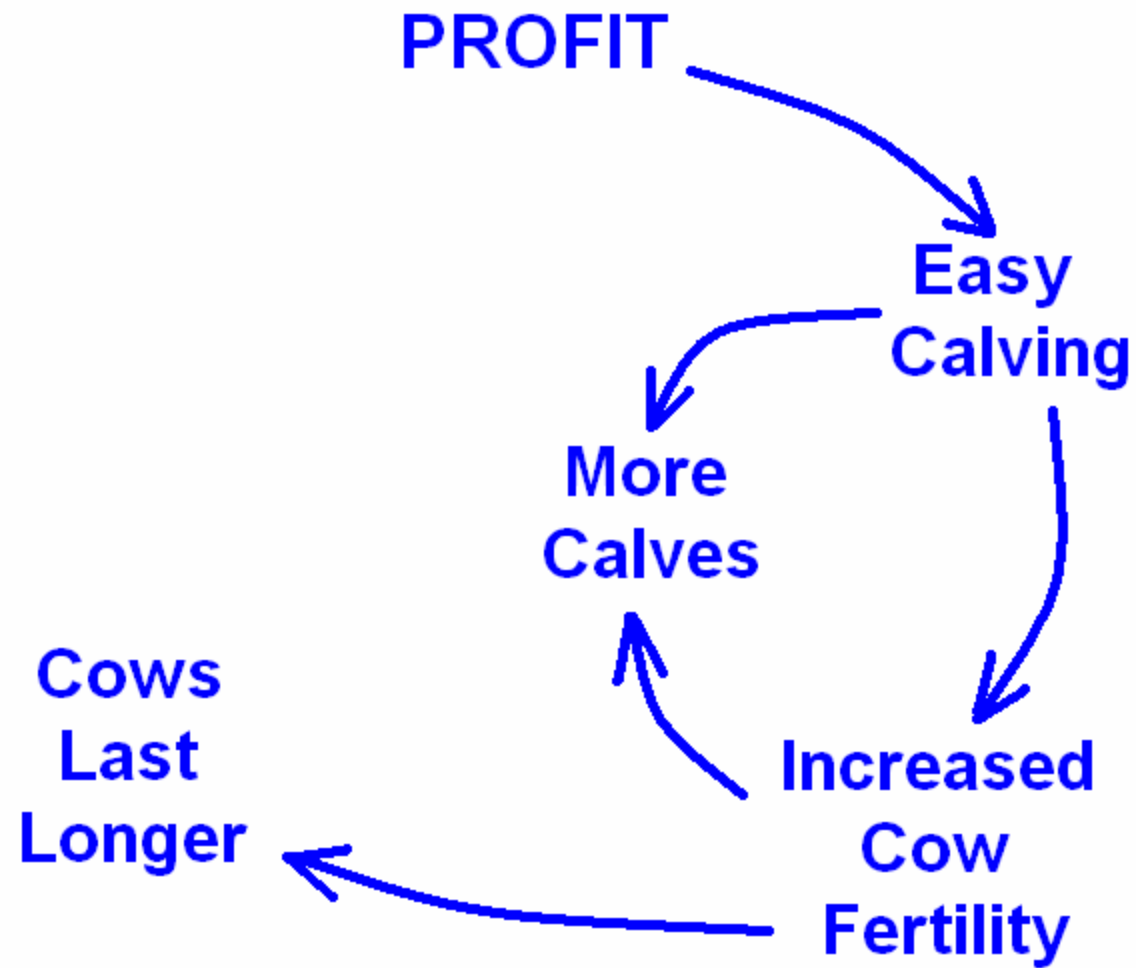
PROFIT

**Easy
Calving**

**More
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**Increased
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PROFIT

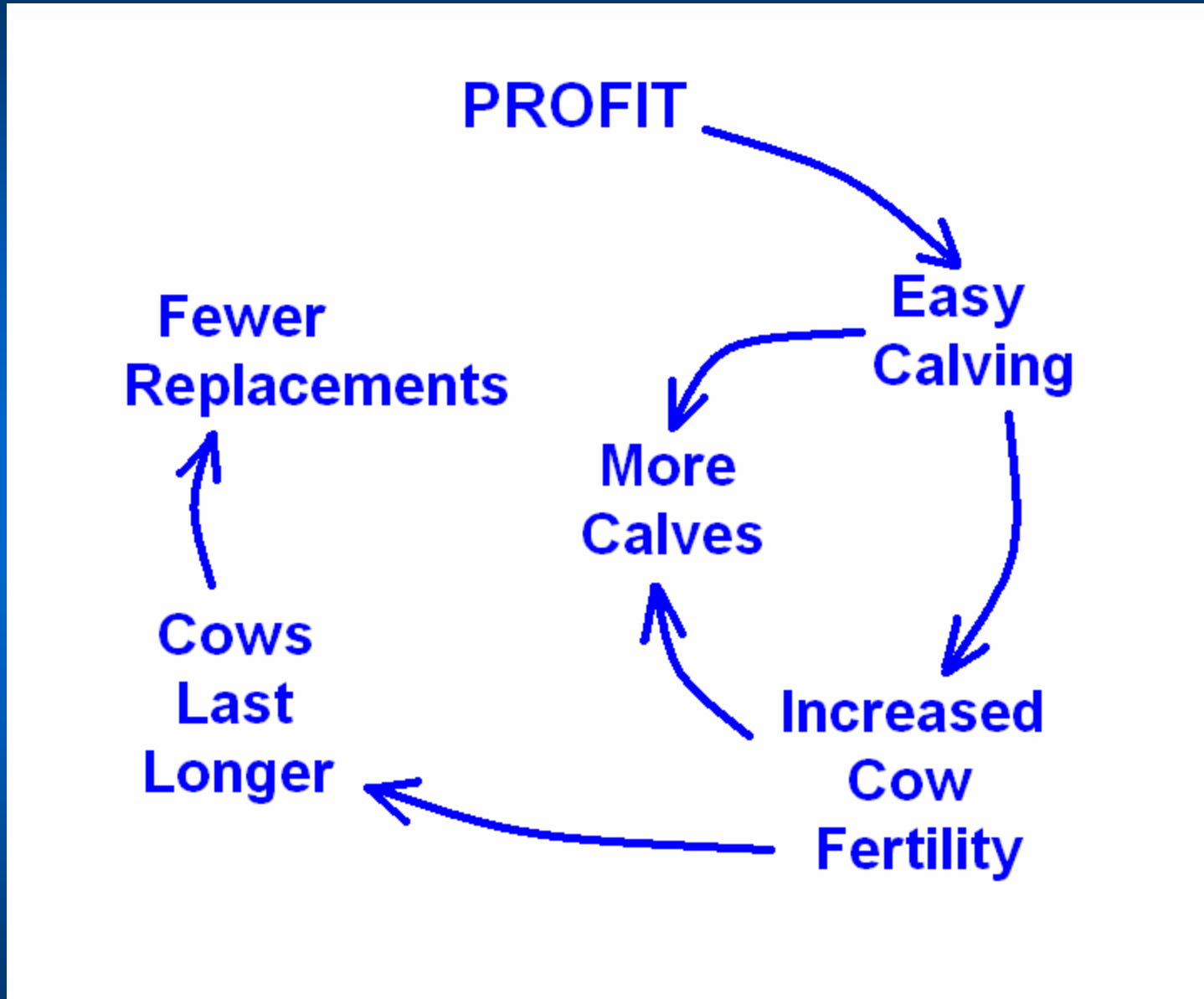
**Fewer
Replacements**

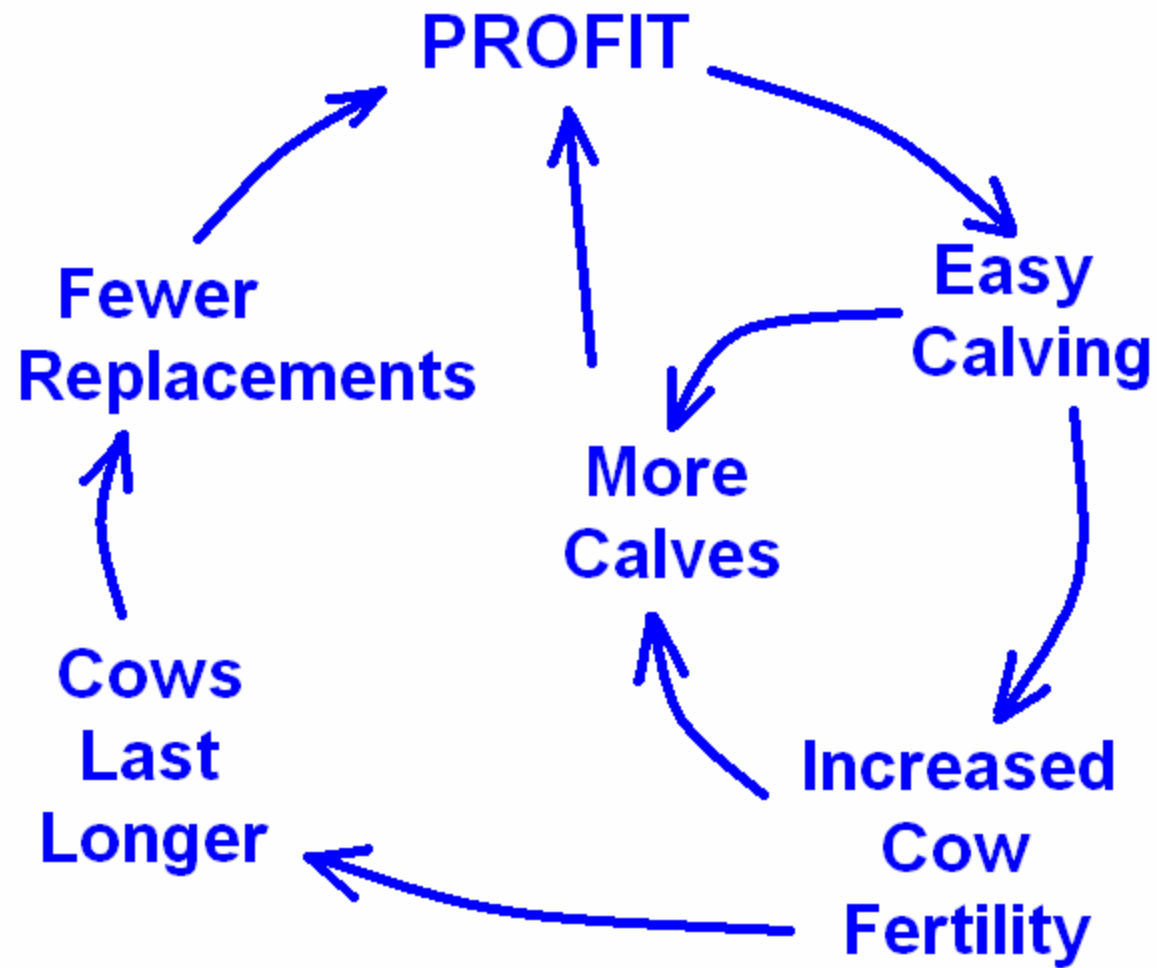
**Easy
Calving**

**More
Calves**

**Cows
Last
Longer**

**Increased
Cow
Fertility**





The Maternal Cow

- Hybrid Vigour
- Sexual Maturity
- Calving Ease
- Good Fertility
- Easy Finishing
- Longevity
- Biosecurity
- Temperament
- Feed Requirement



The Black Baldie

Sexual Maturity

Age at Puberty	Breeds
Very Early (<9 months)	Jersey
Early (9-12 months)	Red Poll, South Devon, Tarentaise, Pinzgauer, Brown Swiss, Holstein.
Moderate (12-14 months)	Hereford, Angus, Devon, Simmental, Maine-Anjou.
Late (14-16 months)	Limousin, Charolais, Chianina, Brangus, Santa Gertrudis.
Very late (>16 months)	Brahman, Sahiwal.

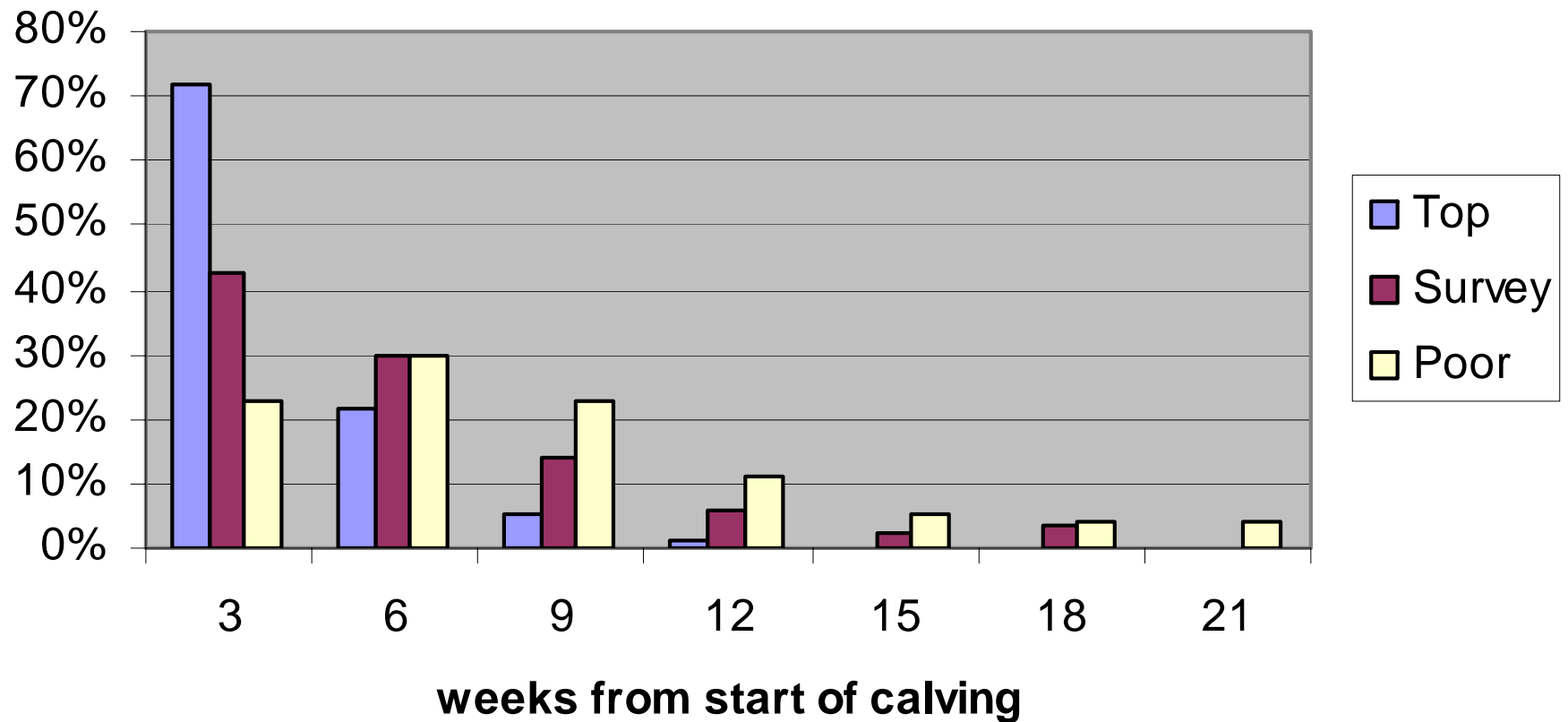
Adapted from Maren et al, 1992.

Calving Ease

*Assisted Calvings and Calf Deaths out of Hereford x Friesian Cows
(Source: MLC)*

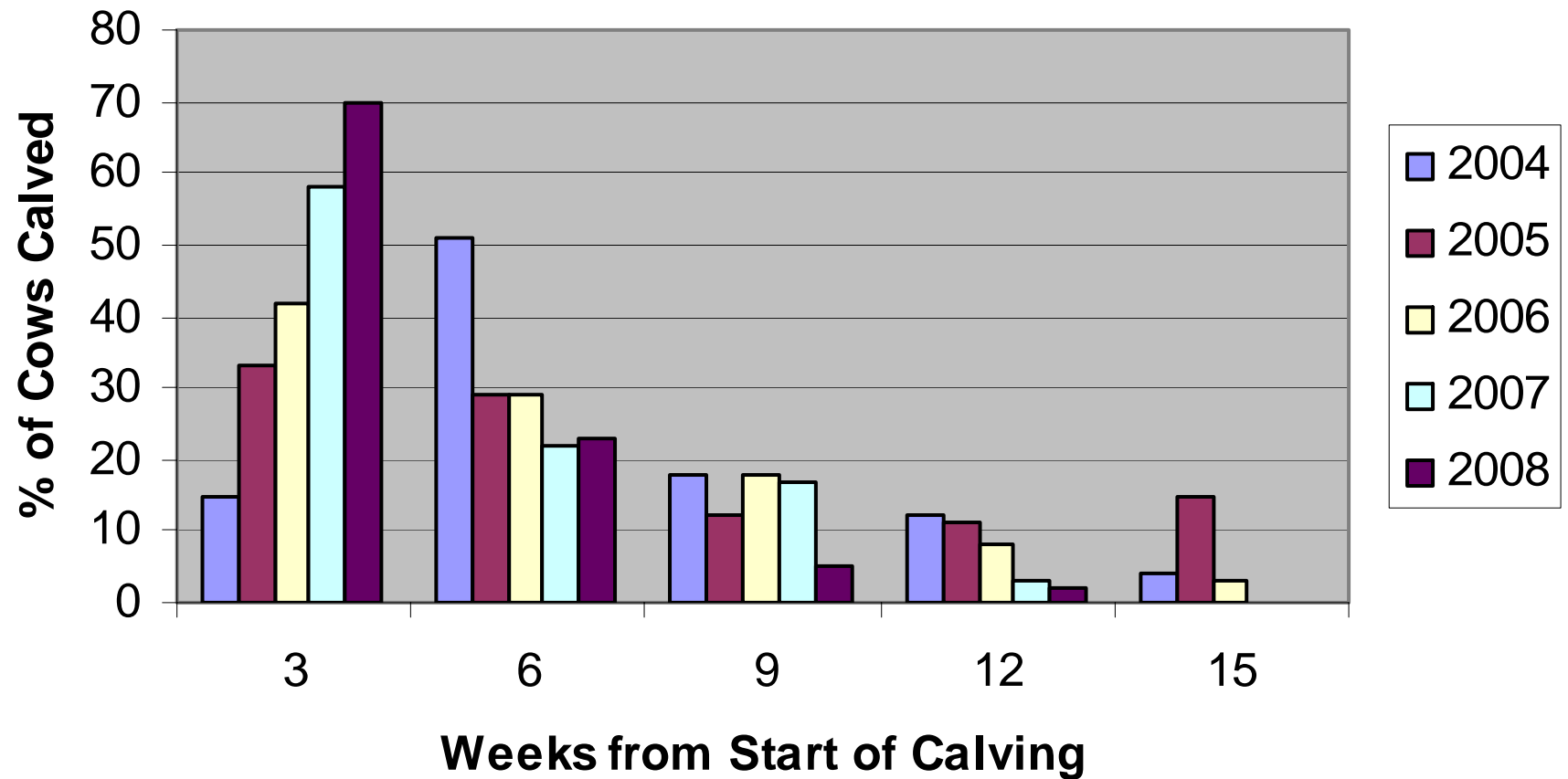
Breed of Sire	% Assisted Calvings	% Calf Deaths
Charolais	10.1	5.1
Simmental	9.7	4.7
South Devon	8.4	4.4
Limousin	7.9	4.9
Lincoln Red	6.0	3.5
Devon	6.1	3.2
Hereford	4.2	1.8
Angus	2.0	1.5

Scottish Calving Patterns



Source: SAC Perth

Drumdown Calving Pattern 2004 - 2008



Easy Finishing

Chardais Cross Heifers

Dam	Age at Slaughter (Days)	Deadweight (Kg)	£/Head
Black Baldie	531	307	686
Continental Cross	573	303	685

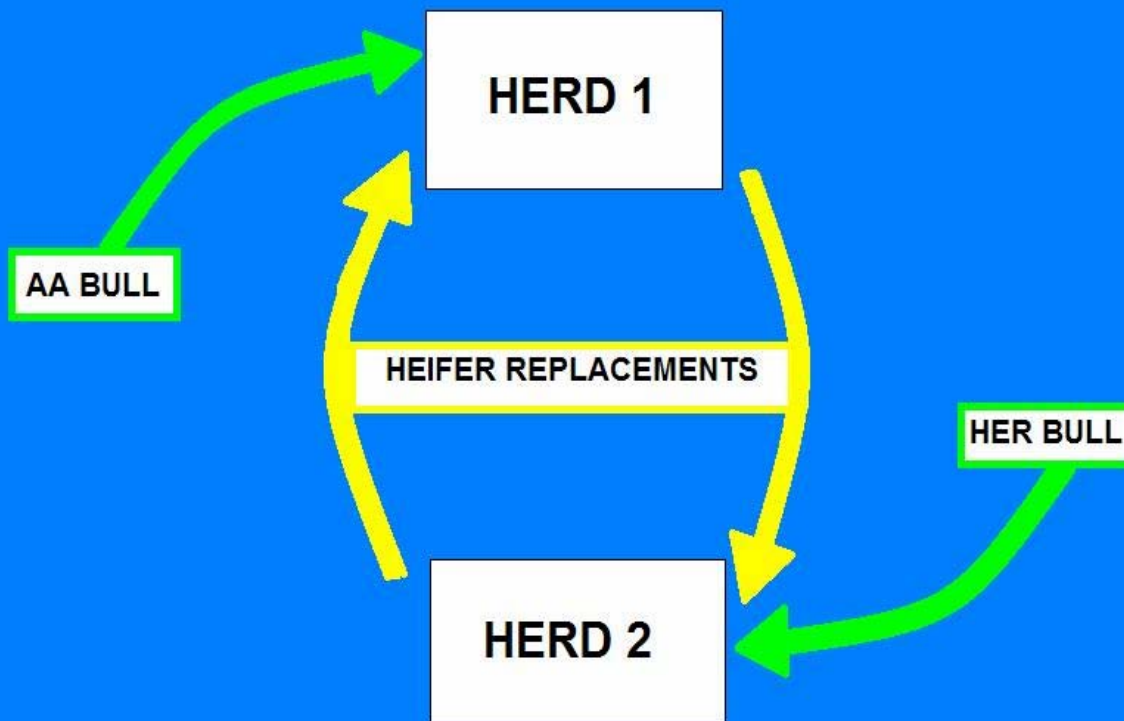
(Source: SAC/ South West Monitor Farm 2006)

Biosecurity

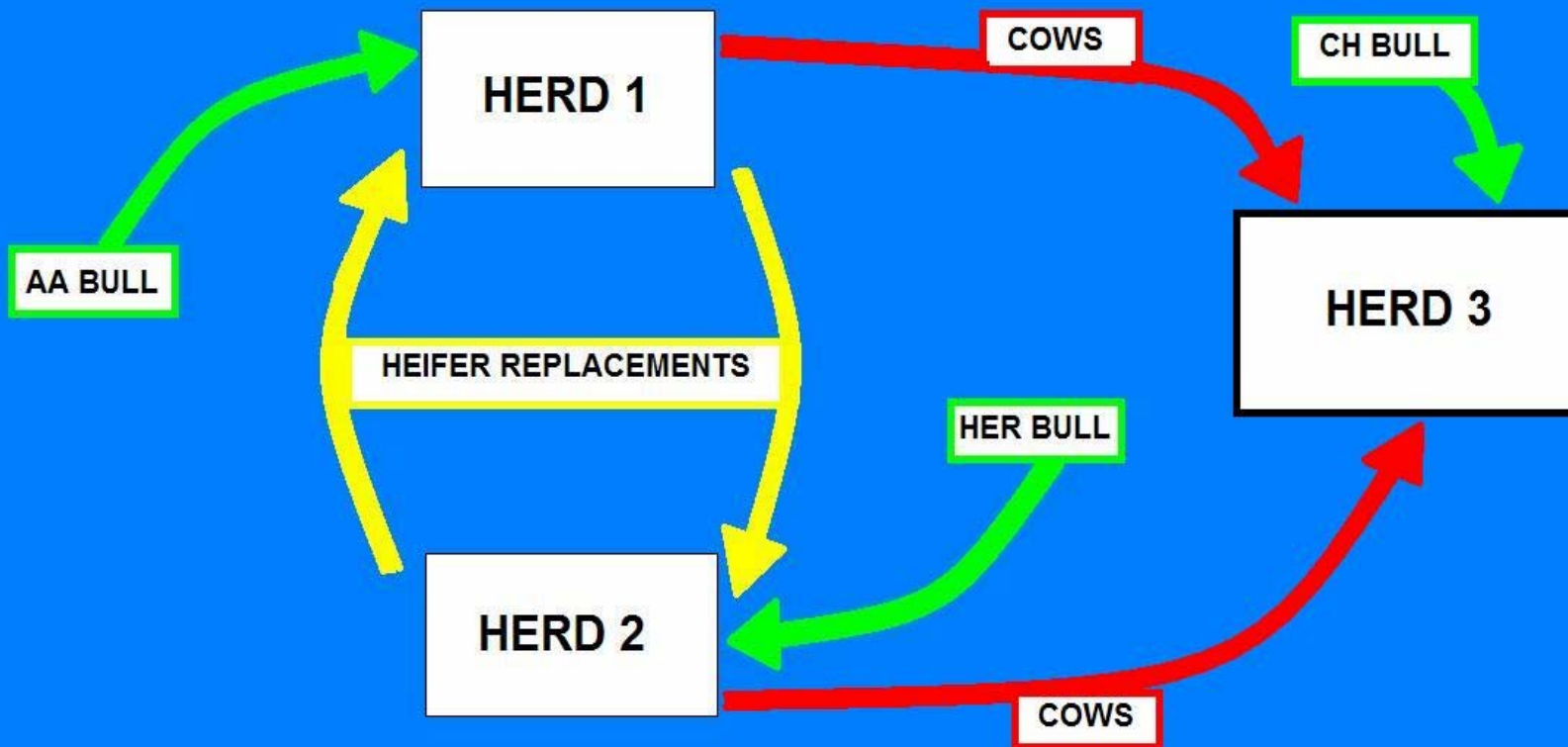
- Johnnes Disease
- BVD
- Leptospirosis
- Tuberculosis
- IBR
- Bluetongue
- Closed Herd



The Rotational Cross



The Rotational Cross



Temperament

- Australian Study
- 0.4kg DLWG
- Up to 70kg in an 85 day feedlot system
- Labour



Feed Requirement

- Monitor Farm trials
- 20% less feed during dry period
- Into winter on a maintenance minus ration

The Benefits of the Maternal Cow

	Increase in Profit or Cost Saving/Cow (Euros)
Increase herd fertility by 4%	20 - 25
Improve Cow Longevity by 1 – 4 Years	20 - 50
Improve Calves weaned by 4%	20 - 25
Easy Fleshing at Finishing /Temperament of Calves	90
Reduce Overwintering Feed Requirement of Cow (20%)	25 - 50
Labour (Less Assists and Caesareans)	12
Total/Cow	185 - 250

Conclusions

- Produce a bull that is ready for work, not show.
- Do not lose the attributes of the breed.
- Promote Maternal Lines
- Explain Easy Crossbreeding Systems.
- Work with other Native Breed Societies
- Concentrate on Producing Tender, Tasty Beef

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