



Using Artificial Insemination In Dry Areas

While reducing breeding inputs when a season gets tight might be the first thing that comes to mind, is it really the best way to go?

Here we take a deep dive into 5 reasons why the use of AI can actually HELP you achieve your breeding objectives, even when rolling green pastures seem like a distant memory!

1. When it's dry, it can be easier to **manage breeder nutrition**, simply because you are far more aware of everything that is going into them. Your supplementation is more targeted, your pasture is worth it's weight in gold, and the cost of feed is higher. This all means your breeders are often in a better place to measure their true fertility and response to feed inputs PLUS you are able to set them up for reproductive success. We often see better pregnancy rates from programs run during this time due to the care and management that goes into them - simply put, there is no room for error!
2. AI **reduces dry season calving drift!** It may be tempting to throw the bulls in thinking it is far more economical to have the boys out there serving the cows as they come on heat... but what's really going on in the paddock? When it's dry, cows oestrus cycles can be disrupted due to fluctuations in hormone production. This leads to longer recovery following calving, more time between ovulations, poor heat behaviour, poor egg quality and a big spread in your foetal ages. Sperm production also fluctuates under these environmental conditions, leading to delayed pregnancies and higher rates of early embryonic loss. Why let your calving interval slip when you could be improving the outcome of future seasons progeny? Starting the season with a round of Fixed Time AI helps kickstart the herd cycling, therefore you end up with more cows pregnant sooner - reducing feed costs and improving productivity, even if you have destocked and are running fewer cattle.
3. **Improve your genetics more rapidly!** When it's dry, you have zero margin for error as herd numbers are smaller. You are breeding from the cream of your crop... so why waste that opportunity to get ahead of the game? Investing in your best genetics now means you can be in a better place when the season lifts. The majority of progeny will be from bulls of higher genetic merit and with prices of bulls lower than what they have been, you can also invest in better back up bulls to follow your program.
4. Tighter joining through Fixed Time AI allows you to **manage your resources better!** When cows are all in a similar stage of pregnancy, their nutritional requirements are also similar. This means you can preg test and segregate them by foetal age sooner, making supplementation easier (as you are not purchasing and managing several types of product), you don't have to segregate cows or heifers into as many paddocks based on pregnancy status, which helps conserve feed and ground cover, and your labour inputs are more streamlined.
5. Identify those passengers early! **Why carry unproductive animals** with lower fertility for longer than you have to? Particularly when feed costs are high and pasture is scarce! Use your breeding program to identify fertility issues and let it do your drafting for you. Enrolling cows and heifers into AI programs can help you find areas where productivity is slipping, allowing you to treat or sell those animals early so you can free up funds to invest in the more productive parts of your business.

Every business will have different breeding objectives and therefore AI may be useful in different ways for each herd.

For best results it is important to speak to your cattle vet when planning an AI program!



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