



BETTER RETURNS

Bull MOT

Assess your bull

Toes

Check feet and locomotion

Testicles

Measure – check scrotal circumference recommended for age and breed

Feel – firm (like a tennis ball) with no lumps

Tone

Body condition score (BCS) of 3.0–3.5 at start of breeding season

Treat

Check vaccinations are up-to-date (eg BVD and Leptospirosis), internal and external parasites etc

Test

Consult your vet for a thorough examination of your bull's physical soundness and semen quality

A fit bull can cut your calving interval, reduce input costs and provide greater financial returns

Ensure you do a bull MOT 10 weeks before the breeding season starts as research shows that 20 per cent of bulls are sub-fertile. Semen production takes over 8 weeks.

Remember, to achieve a BCS of 3, good-quality nutrition is essential

Avoid feeding high levels of concentrates over long periods of time.

Supplement good-quality forage with 2–3kg of high fibre, 14% crude protein concentrate, depending on body condition.

Remember to include a mineral supplement.

Assess mating ability and libido

Observe bulls serving cows and look for problems, eg corkscrew penis.

Check health status

Always ask about the health status of the bull and its previous herd before bringing it onto the farm. Quarantine new bulls for a minimum of 3 weeks. Before use, test his disease status (eg BVD, IBR, Johnes)

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