

Calving information

The data in the following table is taken from the ICBF database for dairy herds with greater than 30 calvings per annum between 2009 and 2013.

Trends in herd size, calving records and calving dates in active dairy herds between 2008 and 2013

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Total Dairy Calvings	64.2	66.7	68.1	71.7	73.0	74.9
Eligible Cows³	72.2	73.1	75.1	77.2	76.5	78.0
Total Heifer Calvings	14.2	14.5	14.7	17.1	17.8	19.1
% Female Calvings	48.5	48.4	48.6	48.7	48.5	48.5
% Difficult Calving (3 or 4)	2.56	1.30	1.97	2.00	1.89	1.77
Median Calving Date - Cows	8 th Mar	7 th Mar	9 th Mar	9 th Mar	6 th Mar	3 rd Mar
Median Calving Date - Heifers	4 th Mar	5 th Mar	7 th Mar	7 th Mar	1 st Mar	1 st Mar
Median Calving Date - Herd	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	4 th Mar	2 nd Mar

- The average number of calvings per active herd increased by 17% between 2008 and 2013.
- The proportion of eligible cows that didn't calve declined from 11% in 2008 to 4% in 2013.
- The increase in herd size is supported by an increase in the number of heifers calvings;
- Median calving date was 5 days earlier for the cows and 3 days earlier for heifers over the period.

³ Number of eligible cows in the herd on 30th June;

Trends in fertility performance of the national dairy herd between 2008 and 2013

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Calving Interval (days)	397	401	402	403	397	394
6 Week Calving Rate (%)	52	53	52	52	55	58
Calves/Cow/Year⁴	0.84	0.84	0.85	0.85	0.89	0.89
Females not calved in Period (%)	11.4	11.5	11.7	10.6	9.0	9.0
Current Replacements rate (%)⁵	17.6	17.5	17.5	19.7	22.0	22.8
Cows Culled in period (%)⁶	13.6	14.1	14.0	12.4	28.0	30.3
Average no. of calvings per cow	4.2	3.5	3.6	3.5	3.5	3.4
Recycled Cows (%)	19	20	20	19	17	16
Autumn 6 Week Calving Rate (%)	65	69	64	49	54	59
Potential Replacement Rate (%)	20.5	26.1	26.0	28.0	28.4	28.8
Replacements bred to Dairy AI (%)	50.3	51.3	50.5	51.3	50.5	52.0
Births with a known sire (%)	53.6	53.3	53.5	57.0	55.1	56.5
Births with calving survey data (%)	44.5	45.0	43.9	47.6	48.2	45.8
Mortality - Dead at Birth (%)	2.97	2.40	1.83	1.95	2.14	1.82
Mortality - Dead at 28 Days (%)	4.35	4.21	3.95	3.71	4.09	4.24
Heifers calved 22-26 months of age (%)	n/a	n/a	n/a	54	56	59

- Most measures of fertility are starting to improve – i.e. calving interval, six-week calving rate, calves born per cow per year.
- There are proportionately more dairy replacement heifers being born since 2009 ahead of quota elimination.
- As a result, the number of calvings per cow has declined as herds are younger.
- A greater proportion of dairy heifers are calving at 2 years of age.

⁴Changed in 2012 from calves born per cow per year and alive at 28 days to being alive at birth;

⁵ Changed in 2012 to include bought in replacement heifers;

⁶ Changed in 2012 to include cows sold live off farm e.g. farm to farm, farm to mart.

Trends in calving pattern and calving interval of the national dairy herd between 2008 and 2013

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Calving Pattern Breakdown						
% Cows Calved in Jan	10.2	10.6	10.7	9.60	11.5	12.8
% Cows Calved in Feb	30.0	29.3	28.2	29.1	31.8	32.0
% Cows Calved in Mar	24.1	24.3	24.6	25.0	22.8	23.1
% Cows Calved in Apr	14.7	14.1	15.2	14.9	13.4	12.7
% Cows Calved in May	7.9	7.9	8.2	8.0	7.3	6.3
% Cows Calved in Jun	3.7	3.2	3.5	3.7	3.1	2.7
Calving Interval Breakdown						
% Cows calved <= 365 days	43.3	41.2	40.6	41.3	44.8	44.0
% Cows calved 366 - 400 days	27.9	28.6	28.3	27.7	26.6	29.8
% Cows calved 401 - 435 days	11.4	11.4	11.8	11.4	10.8	11.3
% Cows calved > 435 days	16.1	17.5	17.9	18.2	16.5	15.1

- The proportion of spring calving herds calving in the January-March period increased slightly by 3.6% between 2008 and 2013;
- Little change in the proportion of cows calving in less than a 365 day calving interval occurred over the 2008 to 2013 period.