

What is a “CIDR”?

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Recently the term “CIDR” is being heard and you might be wondering what it is. “CIDR” is an abbreviation for “controlled internal releasing device.” So what does that mean? It refers to a device that is inserted into the vagina of dairy heifers. The device is impregnated with progesterone that is released into the vagina and absorbed into the blood stream. This absorbed progesterone mimics the progesterone that would be released from the CL or corpus luteum on the ovary during the middle period of the estral cycle. Enough progesterone is absorbed into the blood from the CIDR to keep the heifer from coming into estrus or heat. The CIDR has a “tail” or string that is left protruding from the vagina and is used to remove the CIDR. When the CIDR is removed from the vagina, the blood progesterone levels fall in a fashion similar to when the CL regresses prior to estrus. When the progesterone falls after removal of the CIDR, the heifer will come into estrus and be ready for breeding.

The purpose of the CIDR is to synchronize the onset of estrus in order to improve the timing and efficiency of a breeding program for dairy heifers. Some manufactures recommend the use of CIDRs in combination with other hormones for the most efficient results. By using the CIDRs in a group of heifers, it is possible to have the majority of them to come into a fertile estrus within a 1-3 day period. Using the CIDR eliminates the need for heat detection except in the treated heifers and can result in a higher pregnancy rate. For dairies with under-managed heifer breeding programs, the use of CIDRs may result in more predictable first calving age (22-24 months of age) and lower heifer rearing costs. Care should be taken to insure that heifers are large enough to calve properly at an early age, that they have adequate nutrition to allow them to respond to the CIDR and where AI is used, that the AI technician is aware that more than usual number of heifers will be coming into heat over a short period of time.

CIDR are not currently approved for use in milking dairy cows. However, they can be used in both heifers and mature beef cows. For more details on the use of CIDRs on your dairy, consult your veterinarian to develop a heifer breeding program that will adequately support their efficient use.