



# **NORTHWEST VETERINARY ASSOCIATES, Inc.**

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## The Cost of Extra Days Open

### September 2016 Newsletter

Prepared by Dr. Jen Hull

I have had many clients ask about “days open” and what it is costing them in the long run. So I decided to do some digging and try to come up with a concise answer. What it costs for each extra day open can be hard to calculate, as it is different in every herd based on inputs and management style. A peer-reviewed study by Dr. De Vries from University of Florida showed that the average cost per extra day open can vary between \$3.19 and \$5.41 per cow.

Math was never my strength, so I will spare you a page full of calculations. Basically, the summary is that if you can get your cows bred back sooner (after the voluntary waiting period), you will be losing less money per cow!! After 110 DIM, open cows are really costing you money. I urge you to sit down with your herd health vet, visit about days open as well as other reproductive parameters (calving interval, services per conception, preg rate). There are different protocols that we can implement to help decrease days open, most which require little to no extra financial input! For example, making sure the cow is fed right during her dry period so that she cleans when she calves in and having a protocol in place for when the cow doesn't clean or ends up getting metritis. Making sure that heat detection is being done thoroughly, and breeding is being done at the appropriate time. If on shot protocols, those can be moved around a bit to help decrease extra days open without decreasing services per conception. Your herd health vet will have more in depth suggestions, this is only the tip of the iceberg!

With milk prices the way they are, and our input costs rising every day, it might be time to sit down and crunch some numbers to see if you can make a little more money with the cows you already have! I will also throw in my statement that my herd health clients hear all the time...try to make sound culling decisions! In most herds, you are throwing money away keeping a cow that has been in milk for a long time and is open, especially with milk prices the way they are! Each farm should have a cut off value of pounds per cow in which they are no longer profitable, and cull those animals once they reach that milk weight. Right now the cost of feed/housing for these animals quickly adds up to more than they are making you for their milk in the tank. So I urge you to sit down with your herd health vet and have a chat about reproduction parameters and culling!