Fertility testing of bulls

An infertile or sub-fertile bull can spell disaster in both management and financial terms for a beef or dairy enterprise.

It is becoming common practice now for our clients to request that their bulls receive a bull breeding soundness examination before the start of the breeding season. This examination entails a full clinical examination and a semen assessment. Where possible the semen will be obtained with an artificial vagina (AV), this method having the advantage that the bulls desire and ability to serve a cow is assessed in addition to the quantity and quality of his semen. The down – side of AV collection is the need for a cow to be on heat at the time of the vet’s visit; the easiest way of achieving this being to synchronise oestrus in 2 cows by inserting a CIDR 9 days before the day of the visit (please contact us about the specifics of the programme).

The alternative technique is the use of an electroejaculator which entails gentle electrical stimulation of the bull whilst restrained in a race or crush to obtain a semen sample.

During such a fertility examination a vast array of problems can be detected allowing the problem to be addressed before the bull is turned in rather than in the middle or, worse still at a scanning session at the end of the breeding session.