Making InCalf successful in practice

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My InCalf pathway is conventional – an interest in improving herd fertility led to attending a 2008 InCalf introduction, followed by attending an InCalf advisor training course in Palmerston North. Seeing the value in training others as a pathway to improve my own understanding and performance, I pursued a Train the trainer course. A Wairarapa ‘My herds fertility’ event followed, then a Farmer action group in the 2009/2010 year.

Since then I have been active in the region, using InCalf messages and methods in everyday contact with farmers.

**Key steps that I believe aid in success**

Passion for practice. Not for InCalf per se, but a genuine interest in seeing my farming clients improve. I believe practice should not be just about seeing sick cows, but can encompass just about any areas we can add value to a clients business.

Networking has been an important step. Before getting involved in InCalf there was really only the relationship between myself and the client, and this meant often hitting barriers and trying to understand areas well outside my area of expertise. Involving other local professionals in the decision making process has reaped large rewards both for me and the farmers involved.

Regional benchmarking is possibly one of the most valuable tools in the practices InCalf toolbox, and gets farmers reaching for their Fertility Focus reports to see where they lie in relation to their peers. The ability to present data from a sizable subset of the farmers in the region acts as a default review step, and has significant flow-on effects.

I encourage ReproReady® consults across the practice area pre mating, and look after a group of InCalf ‘one-on-one’ clients. A proactive approach is well received and lifts the practice from a passive business that things happen to; into a proactive business that drives its own success.

Herd condition scoring is a regular part of my activities, and provides an excellent regular path to discussing InCalf matters on farm. Farmers are aware of the importance of cow condition but until it is measured have no reference points from which to act.

**Defining success**

The InCalf ‘vision’ promotes an aim “To enable New Zealand dairy farmers to achieve measured improvement in herd reproductive performance.”

Our businesses aim is to maintain profitability, and show a return on all investments.

During the presentation I’ll show data showing success with local farmers, and some business indices that show how InCalf messages have changed our veterinary business.