

BREEDING MANAGEMENT



Vasectomised bulls fitted with chin balls are an excellent method of heat detection for both heifers and cows. The chin ball is as important as the bull as heats will be missed due to the bull mating the cow and not remaining with her. This happens especially in mature bulls as they mate and walk away, they do less courting than young bulls. Ensure the bull is vasectomised - your vet can check his ejaculates to ensure they are free of semen.

1. A well grown vasectomized bull is invaluable for the breeding season. This reduces the likelihood of injury and he will work for you 24/7.
2. The chin ball shown is the preferred one costing €150. Pad the neck and nose strap with 4" Elastoplast or vet wrap, or a section of a worn yellow volume washer hose works well. This prevents the strap cutting the bull. Ring the bull for convenience when refilling the chin ball.
3. Ensure the chinball is snugly fitted to the bull. It is leather so will need adjusting. Initially, fit the chinball for 1 week without paint to familiarise the bull with it.
4. Only use chinball paint in the chinball, it is a heavy oil base and needs to be well shaken before topping up. Red or blue paint is best in wet weather and yellow or green is best in dry weather.
5. Putting the drum of chinball paint into a bucket of warm water makes it easier to mix. Avoid overfilling the chinball and ensure to secure the plug correctly. One fill should suffice for 10-15 heats. Cost is €60 for 5 litres.
6. The bull marks the cow on the back when he is serving them. Position yourself to see the marks on the back of the cows.
7. A young bull will mark cows a lot on the side when he is courting her, older bulls much less. It is the marks on the top of the back that are key.

TOP TIPS

Reduce injuries by training a young bull with maiden heifers first. Secondly avoid overworking a bull, he is not required until heats are 2 or less per day.

Remove the vasectomised bull when a synchronised group are due in heat - reduces the risk of him getting injured and ensures we have him when required.

Young bulls may be courting cows 24 hours before they are in standing heat - It is the marks on top of the back that are key not the ones on the side. The marks on the side alerts you to the fact that a cow may be coming on heat 'courting marks' - Take care with courting marks on the side and no marks on top of the back as you may be inseminating cows 24 hours prior to standing heat.

Keep the chin ball topped up.



HEALTH & SAFETY

Beware of the bull

Exercise caution when dealing with all bulls including those vasectomised.