

Dairy News

November 2018

Winter is Coming

Hopefully, your young calves have been doing great all summer on the feeding program that you are using. They should be double their size from birth to eight weeks and the incidence of scours and pneumonia should be minimal.

If you want to continue their great performance, how are you planning to deal with the increase in energy demand that comes with colder weather? The colder weather not only requires more energy to stay warm, that energy is used to build components of the immune system. The immune system is very nutrient demanding and with more of the energy going to keep the calf warm, less is used to make antibodies. The result is we at Dairyland Veterinary Service see more clients that have calf issues in the winter.

Winter is coming, and climate change won't keep the snow away. You need to have a plan during cold weather to get more nutrients into your calves.

One method would be to switch to a milk replacer that is designed for winter and has a higher fat content.

A second method is to check the concentration of your mixed milk replacer to see if you can up the percent solids in it. Be careful not to exceed 15% solids. This can create other issues with calf health such as abomasal ulcers and salt toxicity.

A third method would be to feed more milk or milk replacer. Overfeeding however should be avoided since this could cause delayed gastric emptying leading to clostridial diseases or ulcers.

A fourth and best method would be to add an additional feeding. This gets the additional calories into your calves without the problems associated with overfeeding. The feeding times do not have to be placed an equal number of hours apart, but they should be at consistent times.

To prepare for winter, you might also want to evaluate the temperature that you feed the milk at. In winter, it would be appropriate to use warmer water and raise the temperature of the milk by a few degrees. This counteracts the environment cooling of the milk and delivers a warmer meal to cold calves.

Check the ventilation of your calf housing. Calves need fresh air even in winter. Check the amount of bedding you are using. It should be deep enough that calves are surrounded by it. Go over your protocols for caring for newborn calves. Make sure that calves are dried quickly and get good colostrum as soon as possible.

This fall, spend a few moment to prepare your calves for winter.

- Dr. Bill Koffman

Effective Dec. 1, 2018

New Office Hours

Monday - Friday 7:30 am – 4:00 pm

Closed on Saturdays

24 hour emergency service



Raising the Right Calf

Raising our replacement heifers has been looked at as a major expense on our farms with a very poor return on investment until she enters the milking stream. Our mindset has been set on raising our heifers cheap; I challenge us to change that mindset and instead focus on increasing the health of our replacements while increasing their rate of gain. We are concerned about our cost per calf per day rather than what it costs us to gain a pound. Research has shown that average daily gain of our pre-weaning calves is directly correlated to milk production; therefore our mindset should change to maximize our average daily gain and raise calves on a cost per pound of gain. Calves who have a higher average daily gain will increase tissues in their udders important for milk production. Calves that have a higher average daily gain also have lower morbidity and mortality rates, which will decrease our cost of antibiotics. Research at Cornell University showed that calves treated one time with antibiotics, and responded to treatment, gave 1,000 pounds less milk (1,085 lbs) than calves not treated. In this research project, most of the calves that received a treatment were treated for pneumonia.

	2 quarts 2x/day	3 quarts 3x/day
Whole Milk 3.15 P, 3.5 F	\$2.93	\$2.04
Whole Milk 3.25 P, 3.75 F	\$2.95	\$2.08
Whole Milk 4.1 P, 5.1 F	\$2.52	\$1.89
MR 20 CP, 20 F 12.5% TS	\$3.23	\$2.07
MR 22 CP, 18 F 12.5% TS	\$2.86	\$1.87
MR 22 CP, 20 F 12.5% TS	\$2.89	\$1.90
MR 24 CP, 20 F 12.5% TS	\$2.63	\$1.77
MR 24 CP, 22 F 12.5% TS	\$2.66	\$1.79
MR 25 CP, 15 F 12.5% TS	\$2.41	\$1.90
MR 26 CP, 17 F 12.5% TS	\$2.39	\$1.82
MR 26 CP, 24 F 12.5% TS	\$2.48	\$1.71
MR 28 CP, 15 F 12.5% TS	\$2.19	\$1.88
MR 28 CP, 20 F 12.5% TS	\$2.24	\$1.67
MR 28 CP, 25 F 12.5% TS	\$2.31	\$1.62

Above table describes the cost to gain a pound for a variety of feeding programs. As you can see, the less intensive calf feeding programs will cost you more per pound of gain as compared to the more intensive calf feeding programs.

Management and nutrition changes that we can make to increase our ADG and decrease our cost per pound of gain will result in more profitable dairy heifers that will enter the lactation group at an earlier age. Not only will the calves we raise be more profitable, they will also be healthier, allowing us to be more selective in what calves will enter the lactating herd.

- Mike Burchard, DVM

DROPSHIP SPECIAL

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