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Successful Calf Raising

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Successful

Calf Raising

By R. A. CAVE, *Extension Dairyman*

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This Leaflet is one of the
PROFITABLE DAIRYING SERIES
on Practical Points for
South Dakota Dairy Farmers



AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE
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Successful Calf Raising

By R. A. CAVE, *Extension Dairyman*

It costs money to raise dairy heifers up to producing age. No dairy farmer can afford to raise any calves to keep as milkers in his herd, unless their mothers are profitable producers and their sires are proven bulls, or from excellent producing families.

Care of Dam Is First Step

The feeding and care of the mother previous to calving is the first step in successful calf raising.



She needs to be put in condition for another ten months period of heavy milk production then drop a strong healthy calf. This calls for a rest of six to eight weeks with all the good hay, silage or pasture she can eat, and plenty of water to drink.

Her daily ration will vary from 4 to 8 pounds depending upon her condition and appetite. It may consist of a mixture of ground farm grains, but also should contain two pounds of steamed bone meal and one pound of salt to each 100 pounds of the mixture.

Ten days before calving it is a good practice to place the cow in a clean disinfected, well-bedded box stall, if possible, and change her grain ration to equal parts of bran and ground oats with one pound of linseed meal per day.

Newborn Calf Needs Attention

As soon as the calf is dropped, clean its nose and mouth of membranes and treat the navel cord with iodine. Slap its chest sharply with the hand and rub it vigorously if it has difficulty in breathing.

The calf should be up sucking within an hour. If not, lift the calf to its feet and help it get started. Before it sucks, wash the udder and teats of the cow with warm water containing a small amount of disinfectant.



It is important that the calf get the colostrum or first milk from its mother for the first three days either by being allowed to suck or fed by hand.

The colostrum is very beneficial to the calf as it cleans out his digestive system and furnishes Vitamin A, minerals and other materials that will help him to resist disease.

Carefulness Pays

Keep the calf from gulping or drinking too fast. The right temperature for the calf milk is 90 to 100 degrees F. Use a milk scale and weigh the milk for each calf. Wash and scald the calf pails after each feeding, the same as the other milk pails. Carefulness counts in successful calf raising.

The amount of milk to feed depends upon the weight and condition of the calf. A good rule to follow is one pound of milk per day for each 10 pounds of the weight of the calf. It is better to underfeed than overfeed.

Calf Meal Will Cut Milk Needs

Calf meals, either home made or commercial, can be used to reduce the amount of whole milk needed, when skimmilk is not available. The following mixtures are suggested.

Home Made Calf Meal		Grain Mix With Skimmilk	
Coarsely ground corn	30 lbs.	Coarsely ground corn	25 lbs.
Coarsely ground oats	30 lbs.	Coarsely ground oats	25 lbs.
Wheat Bran	10 lbs.	Wheat Bran	25 lbs.
Linseed meal	10 lbs.	Linseed Meal or Soy bean	
Soybean oil meal	10 lbs.	oil meal	25 lbs.
Dried skimmilk or		Salt	1 lb.
buttermilk	10 lbs.		
Steamed bone meal	1 lb.		
Salt	1 lb.		

The following schedule of milk feeding is suggested for Holstein or Brown Swiss calves, weighing 80 lbs. at birth, when whole milk is marketed: **First week** 8 pounds per day in two or three feedings. This will include the feeding of colostrum milk the first three days. **Second week** 9 pounds of whole milk per day. **Third week** 10 pounds. **Fourth week** 8 pounds and 2 pounds warm water per day. **Fifth week**, 6 pounds milk, 4 pounds warm water. **Sixth week** 4 pounds milk 6 pounds warm water and, **Seventh week**, 2 pounds milk 8 pounds warm water. If the calf is small and weak it should get whole milk for a longer period.

Teach the calf to start eating calf meal and some good-quality, green mixed hay at about 10 days old. Gradually increase the daily allowance until it is cleaning up 2 pounds of calf meal and one pound of hay at 8 weeks of age.

Give the calf plenty of fresh water to drink but no more milk. It should have all the good hay it will eat and the calf starter gradually increased to 4 pounds per day by the time it is six months old.

No silage should be fed until the calf is 4 months old. It can then replace some of the hay. At 6 months of age the calf starter can be gradually replaced by the grain mixture.

When cream is marketed and skimmilk is available, the whole milk can be replaced by the skimmilk during the fourth week. The grain mix is then used instead of the calf meal.

If the hay received by both the cows and calves is not of

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first-quality (green and leafy) it is advisable to feed one table-spoon of crude cod-liver oil each day in the milk.

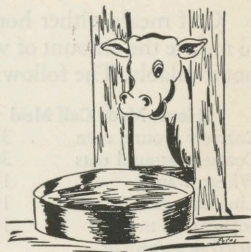
Clean the feed boxes and mangers each day and put in fresh feed. Keep the pens clean and dry if possible.

Do not pasture calves before they are four months old; then continue to feed them grain until they are at least yearlings. Keep them growing on plenty of high quality roughage and good pasture. If the pasture is short or the roughage poor, supplement with grain.

Pens and Equipment Important

Individual pens for the little calves, 4 ft. by 6 ft. and with solid board sides, will prevent drafts, cut down on disease and the spread of disease and save many calves. They can be removed to larger pens with other calves when about a month old.

Calves should not be allowed to suck each other as it may result in blind quarters or other udder injury. Calf pens with stanchions, a feed trough, and manger along one side, saves labor, prevents sucking, teaches each calf to eat grain at an earlier age and get its share of the feed.



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