



DAIRYINFO

W-S Feed & Supplies, Ltd.
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Taking service to another level!

A Successful Calf & Heifer Program

Your future herd begins with a successful pre-partum cow program, along with carefully planned and managed calf and heifer programs. A calf, at birth, represents a future with potential. The magnitude of this potential relies, in part, on her genetics.

However, good nutrition and management will substantially impact her future productivity and profitability. Getting her off to a good start is vitally important. Here are a few tips on helping your heifer calves grow and mature into productive members of the lactating herd. You might consider integrating them into your current program, or ask me about these and many other possibilities that can help you move your operation forward.

- Develop a vaccination program for the entire cow herd, which will help with the production of quality colostrum. Check with your herd veterinarian for recommendations.
- Make sure the cow will calve in a clean, dry and well-bedded pen. This area should allow for frequent observation and be free of excessive noise. Sanitation is critical at all times, including a handler's hands and arms. Use of disposable plastic sleeves is recommended if the cow requires assistance during calving.
- After birth, dip and soak the umbilical cord in a 7% tincture of iodine solution. It is also important that the calf is properly dried. This is critical especially in colder weather.
- Feed the calf colostrum from its dam. This is preferably given from a bottle, rather than directly from the cow. This will help reduce the incidence of disease and allow you to control the volume of colostrum fed.
- Ensure the calf receives sufficient colostrum during the first one or two feedings (3.8 liters by 12 hrs. of age). Colostrum provides valuable antibodies needed by calves early in its life.
- For calves older than 18-24 hours the value of feeding colostrum is greatly reduced. At this point calves should be placed on a quality milk replacer. I can recommend a milk replacer that best fits your operation!
- Observe calves closely for the first 3-5 days, watching for signs of scouring or other symptoms of disease. Any health problems observed should be immediately addressed. A few hours in delay can mean loss of the calf. She should

also have available a high caliber calf starter, such as our W-S calf starter/grower products.

- The introduction of starter feed within one week of the calf's birth is important.
- Raise calves in individual hutches, which are kept clean and dry at all times, and out of drafts, wind and inclement weather conditions. Calves raised individually should not be grouped together until after weaning.
- Ensure good sanitation at all times, including hutches, bottles, buckets, etc. This is important in helping to reduce the possibility of infection and spread of disease.
- Implement a vaccination program for all replacement heifers. Your veterinarian can assist you with this.

The goal of a quality calf and heifer program is to have them calve in 22-24 months and join the lactating herd as productive and profitable cows. I will be happy to work with you in reviewing your entire calf and heifer program and management protocols, as well as what you have in place for dry and transition cows, and the entire lactating herd. Contact me today. Let's work as a team to **GET MILK!** It all begins... at calving!



SPRING IS COMING!
Order Seed Today. Ask Me for Details.
RENAISSANCE... *planting quality!*

Interested in discussing topics in this newsletter, or to do a better job feeding and managing your cows? Call us today. Our goal and commitment is to help you!!

VOLUME 4 – Number 2 – February 2014
SOLUTIONS FOR SUCCESS

Importance of beta carotene!

The importance of beta carotene has been documented in various research trials and an available on-line calculator can assist your efforts to better ensure the cows are getting what they need, especially from pre-fresh until pregnant. The online calculator is located at:

<http://www.rovimixbetacarotene.com/us/cowculator/index.html>. Additionally, there is extensive documentation supporting the use of complexed trace minerals as an aid to the reproductive function.

The benefits of feeding **beta carotene** include:

- β Carotene may act on the uterus, ovaries and ovulation
- β carotene as an anti-oxidant that may enhance immunity
- β carotene has lowered SCC/mastitis in trials; lower SCC may improve reproduction

Contact us today and get all the facts, and help move your herd to another level for improving productivity and profitability!

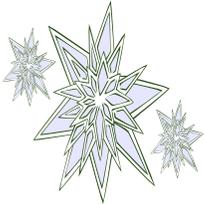
Control energy intake of dry cows

"We still have far too many cows in far too many herds that leave early, due to health problems around the [time of] transition," says Dr. Jim Drackley, professor of dairy science at the University of Illinois. Energy balance may have a lot to do with this problem. "Dry cows don't do a very good job of regulating energy intake to meet requirements... so they easily consume more than they require." A controlled-energy dry-cow diet is one approach to improve this situation. Data from a U of IL study (2007) shows that overfed dry cows ate 156% — and as much as 185% — of their energy requirement. These cows exhibited a "marked drop-off" in feed intake around the time of calving. They also had higher blood nonesterified fatty acid (NEFA) and liver triglyceride levels than dry cows restricted to 80% of their energy requirements. Post-calving feed intake also picked up much more slowly in these cows than the controlled-or limit-fed cows. Limit-feeding is not advocated for dry cows, Dr. Drackley cautions. However, controlling energy intake by pairing low-energy forages with corn silage is one possible solution. I am happy to work with you to review your dry cow ration(s) and work toward optimizing the energy in their diet. Healthy transition cows can mean better start-ups, along with improved productivity and profitability in the lactating herd.

(edited from an article by Dr. Jim Drackley, U of IL)



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CHECK IT OUT!