



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 dry 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 also 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 (but discrete) 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 ASAP after birth. 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 several feedings (3.8 liters by 6-8 hours of age). Colostrum provides valuable antibodies needed by calves in the early weeks of its life. If sufficient colostrum is not available – or if it is poor quality – we have a colostrum replacement product that can help to ensure necessary nutrients are given to the calf from the start. It is a good idea to keep a supply of this on hand all the time.
- For calves that are older than 24 hours the value of feeding colostrum is greatly reduced. At this point, calves should be placed on a quality milk replacer. We can recommend a milk replacer that best fits your operation!
- Observe calves closely for the first 3-5 days, watching closely for signs of scouring or other symptoms of disease. Any health problems that are

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. Check with us for our recommendation!

- Introduce a quality starter feed within one week of the calf's birth for maximum impact.
- Raise calves in individual hutches or pens, which are kept clean and dry at all times, and out of drafts, wind and inclement weather conditions. To minimize disease risk, calves 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 calves. Your veterinarian can assist you with this.

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

Around the Farm as Spring Arrives...

Have you ever thought about doing a "safety check" around the farm? This includes in- and outside the barn, loafing areas, passageways, and any areas frequented by people or livestock. Often, there are places that can become a danger zone, impacting the health, safety and well-being of farm workers and cows alike! As temperatures begin to moderate (and in some areas the snow has already melted), it might be a good idea to check out your entire farm to ensure it is a safe place – free from debris and potentially harmful things such as bits and pieces of metal, wood and glass, nails, misplaced equipment, etc. Also, look out for protruding and potentially harmful objects such as pipes, lumber and electrical systems. This can help make your farm safer for everything and everyone! Spring cleaning provides an opportunity to help prevent injury, while making your farm a more comfortable and enjoyable place. Your cows will appreciate a safer place to live, walk, lie down... and produce.

**PREPARE FOR HEAT & HUMIDITY.
CONTACT US TODAY SO WE CAN REVIEW YOUR
FACILITY AND MANAGEMENT PLANS!**

*Interested in discussing topics in this newsletter, or want to do a better job feeding and managing your cows? Call us!
Our goal is to help you. That's the W-S Feed commitment!*

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THE IMPORTANCE OF PLANNING ~

Spring will soon be here, according to the calendar, and we will turn our attention to plowing, planting, and cleaning the barn and farmyard after months of inability due to snow and ice. It is also time to start thinking and making specific plans to cope with heat stress and its potential impact on your livestock. This includes facilities, use of cooling systems, and management considerations, along with nutrition and ration adjustments. Renaissance has products, techniques and tips to help you address any nutritional challenges, helping to maintain and improve dry matter intakes, and keep your cows from the ups-and-downs that heat stress often brings. Be proactive this spring, while planning for summer... and think cool with Renaissance!

COMMITTED to SOLUTIONS for SUCCESS!

Farm safety & spring planting!

Many areas feature "Farm Safety Week" in the month of March ~ an opportunity to focus on the critical need for safety at all levels on and around the farm. Paying attention to details of safety is critical to you and everyone who works on your farm. We often think that our farm is a safe place, an assumption that is based on the fact we are conscious of the need for farm safety, combined with the possibility that there has rarely (or never) been an accident or injury on your farm. Safety is a complex issue on any farming operation, regardless of the farm size! Have you developed a "safety protocol" for your farm? This should include the use and operation of all machinery and equipment, stating concerns and cautions. How about livestock handling procedures; working around chemicals and manure handling systems; feed storage units; electrical systems; accessibility [by children, especially] to all aspects of the farm; and more? We might even add elements of biosecurity to this list. While a written, posted policy and procedure statement may not eliminate accidents, it can certainly help in keeping everyone who works and visits your farm more informed about safety expectations. Take a few moments to consider safety on your farm now and as we progress toward planting, harvesting and more. Have a safe, productive spring... along with the rest of 2017!



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MARCH 2017

CHECK IT OUT!