



Wise Choices. Healthy Animals.

Dairy News

November 2012

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Do Calves Need More Milk In Winter?

Of course they do! Cold weather would otherwise reduce their rate of gain and reduce their immunity to common diseases.

Thumb rule: A calf should double its weight by 56 days of age.

That means that a calf weighting 84 pounds at birth should gain on average 1.5 pounds per day by weaning at 56 days. More is better! Studies correlate 750 pounds more milk in the 1st lactation with every 0.1 pound increase in ADG by weaning.

But, how cold does it have to be to start feeding more?

Thumb rule: If you need a jacket, you need to start thinking about increasing calf rations.

The temperature at which a calf does not need to expend energy to keep warm is 60° degrees. For calves less than 3 weeks of age, this extra energy needs to come from milk because starter intakes are still minimal.

How much more milk should they be fed?

Thumb rule: For every 10°F below 60, a calf needs an extra pint of milk per day.

Thumb rule: If not adjusted for, each 10°F drop will drop average daily gain by 0.2 pounds.

So, at 40°F that would be an extra quart per day, at 20°F an extra 2 quarts per day, at 0°F an extra 3 quarts and at -20°F an extra gallon per day.

How much can a calf safely drink at one time?

Thumb rule: To avoid bowel disorders, feed only 5% of body weight (as fed) at each feeding.

For an 80 pound newborn, this is about 2 quarts of milk or replacer. A 100 pound calf can have 2.5 quarts per feeding. In cold weather calves need more than that to maintain growth rates and health. The 3 options are:

Add extra feedings for calves less than 3 weeks (BEST OPTION for the calf)

Add a fat product to the milk (2oz per feeding brings DM to 15%)

Mix milk replacer more concentrated (must stay below 15-18% total DM)

As a veterinarian, what would I like you to do?

Meet with your herd veterinarian and make a written winter feeding schedule for your farm.

An example of a winter feeding schedule from Dr. Sheila McGuirk Univ. of WI.

WHOLE MILK	MAY to AUGUST	SEPTEMBER to APRIL
2 quarts twice daily	0-7 days	0-3 days
3 quarts twice daily	7-14 days	3-10 days
4 quarts twice daily	14-49 days	10-49 days
4 quarts once daily	49-56 days	49-56 days

Notice that the feeding amounts increase as the calf grows. Also, weaning is done by switching to once per day feedings to allow the calf to adapt to the increased starter intakes. The above chart is for whole milk. Milk replacers generally contain 18% less energy when mixed as recommended.

Do Calves Need More Milk In Winter? cont....

What can I do to help calves to eat more starter?

Thumb rule: Calves need 4 times as much water intake as starter intake.

Make sure calves, especially those consuming starter, get plenty of warm water. In colder weather, water should be provided at or slightly above body temperature (102°F) to prevent energy being used to warm it up. Feed water after liquid feedings and provide a 3rd water feeding during the day during hot or cold weather.

What other things should I watch out for?

Thumb rule: Total solids in calf milk or replacers should not vary by more than 1%.

Consistency is very important when feeding calves. Never feed more than 15% total solids to calves (whole milk is about 12.5%) without also feeding water. They risk dehydration if they don't consume enough water. Your milk or milk replacer mixing can be checked by your veterinarian with a Brix refractometer to determine total solids. Sanitation is also very important. Don't feed milk you wouldn't drink. If you are having sicknesses in your calves, have your veterinarian do bacteria counts on your calf milk.

Fill out a winter feeding schedule with your herd veterinarian and receive a free calf weight tape.

- Dr. Bill Koffman and Dr. Kevin Rockow

Potential Residue Violations from Extra Label Drug Use

The FDA establishes tolerances for drug residues in food animals. These tolerances are based on approved labeled uses for the drug. This is because the FDA only has data for drug residue depletion on the approved production class. The main production classes are beef, dairy, and veal. Many products have been approved for beef and non-lactating dairy (less than 20 months of age), but not lactating dairy or veal. If a drug is approved in one production class, usage in another class is considered extra label drug use (ELDU). Therefore,

such use would mean there is not an established tolerance and **ANY DETECTABLE LEVEL** would be a violative drug residue. Veterinarians and cattle producers should therefore exercise extreme caution using drugs not approved for that production class of animal and consider avoiding such use due to unknown withdrawal times. Remember that the FDA definition of a lactating dairy cow is a dairy breed animal over 20 months of age. Spring heifers and dry cows are classified as "lactating dairy cows".

What are some examples of such use?

Example: Using Nuflor (florfenicol), Micotil (tilmicosin), Draxxin (tulathromycin) in a dairy animal over 20 months of age. The labeled meat withdrawal time for beef cattle would not apply to use in the production class. **The meat withdrawal time would be the amount of time for the level to be "zero" which is unknown.** Using the beef labeled withdrawal times for these drugs in lactating cows could result in a violative residue.

Example: Using most products in bob veal calves. There are few medications that are approved for male dairy calves intended for veal. Most medication detected in this production class of animal will likely result in a violation. For dairy bull calves that may be marketed soon, use only products that are approved in preruminant calves. Avoid any products with the statement "not for use in calves to be processed for veal."

- AABP Newsletter July 2012

Safety Concerns When Using Micotil

Store in a secure location— the potential for human misuse and human injury should be considered when storing, administering or disposing of Micotil or the container.

Cases of accidental and intentional self-exposure have been reported, including fatalities.

Elanco has a new complimentary Simcro™ Sekurus™ Syringe available which reduces the chance of self-injection. If you are interested contact the office and we will get you one.

Complimentary English and Spanish Dose and administration posters for placement near treatment facilities and a SAFE Guidelines detailer are available if interested. Please contact the office or ask your Veterinarian.

Uses: For cattle or sheep, inject SUBQ. Intravenous use in cattle or sheep will be fatal. Do not use in Female dairy cattle 20 months of age or older. Always use proper drug handling procedures to avoid accidental self-injection. Do not use in automatically powered syringes. Micotil has a pre-slaughter of 42 days.

Consult your veterinarian with additional questions.