



CALF SECTION

Preparing your Calf for Ag day:

Calves are to be born between 1st of July and 15th of September.

Although the dairy industry is not huge in our area, it is still common for children who do not live on farms to borrow a calf to rear as a pet for showing. Many farmers are only too happy to loan a calf due to the extra care and attention that it will receive. Some people have a concern about the size of the calf in relation to a younger child. But calves make great pets and respond well to all the love and attention that a child can bestow on them. Calves 'love' all the grooming, washing and regular feeding. With time and attention, the calf will form a trusting relationship and enjoy 'hanging out' with its handler.

APPROXIMATE REARING NEEDS:

- Milk Powder
- Calf teats are available to attach to a coke bottle, or a complete re-usable bottle and teat can be purchased. A calf feeder may be used, or the calf can be fed from a bucket. The calf **must not** be reared on its mother or foster mother.
- Pellets or meal from 1 week old
- Halter and lead
- Brush
- Drench
- Vaccine
- Cover

EARLY DAYS: You need to give your calf a name and record its date of birth and breed.

HOUSING REQUIREMENTS: Dry and draught free shelter is important. Cold, wet, windy weather will have a direct effect on your calf. A waterproof shed with clean dry bedding (preferably sawdust) is essential.

An adequate cover will provide extra warmth and protect the calf from cold weather. This can be made from a clean sack, or you could buy one. The cover assists the calf to shed loose hair and promotes a shiny coat. On hot days, the cover can be removed. Keep the cover clean and give it an occasional wash.

To avoid chaffing ensure that the cover is not too heavy on the calf. Chaffing can sometimes be seen over the top of the tail and around the neck as these are the areas that the cover seam sits upon. It is in these corresponding areas on the cover that the belts are sown causing a constant pressure that may cause chaffing and discomfort. If necessary, sew soft fabric over the cover seams where it sits across the top of the tail and the neck. In placing the cover on the calf make sure that the front and back belts are not too tight to prevent any chaffing and remember that calves are continuously growing, therefore the cover needs to be adjusted frequently.

FEEDING: Calf milk powders are available from farming outlet stores. Choose a brand that contains anticoccidial. Cheaper brands can potentially provide less nutrients which will affect the growth of your calf. Mixing and feeding instructions are clearly written on the milk powder bag. For best results feed your calf milk twice a day until Ag Day. Supplement the milk with calf meal to encourage rumen development. Chaffage or hay can also be offered. Ensure your calf has access to fresh, clean water every day. Allow it to graze on reasonably long grass everyday once it is over two weeks of age.

Take advice from farmers, vets, or other experienced people where you are not sure what to do.

Always do the feeding of your calf yourself. You need to be part of the rearing programme as soon as possible to establish a strong bond with your calf. Make sure the milk is warmed to blood heat (that is warm on your skin) when being fed. Do not over feed, as scouring can result.

PREVENTION OF SCOURS: Ensure your calf has had at least 2 litres of colostrum within 6 hours of its birth.

House in a dry, draught free, hygienic shed

Avoid sudden changes in the type, quantity or temperature of milk or milk powder.

SCOURS (Diarrhea)

Reasons for scours occurring are many and although treatable they are best avoided by careful attention to management, cleanliness, and regular feeding. Remember the old saying 'Prevention is better than cure'. In the event of scours occurring, seek advice from a person you know or the vet.

IF YOUR CALF SCOURS –

DAY ONE – Stop feeding milk and keep your calf off milk for 24 hours. Feed it two litres of electrolyte mix three times daily to keep it hydrated. (Electrolyte mix is available in small pack sizes from your local farm store or vet). Keep it in a clean, dry, draught free environment and keep warm (put a cover on it).

Most of calf scours are viral or protozoal origin and so antibiotics are not needed. However, if your calf has blood in the scour, or where there is severe depression, or calves that are less than 5 days old antibiotics may be needed. In these cases, a consultation with your vet will be required.

DAY TWO – If your calf is still scouring after 24 hours, feed it 2 litres of electrolyte, followed by 20-30 minutes later by 1 – 1.5 litres of milk. Repeat 2 times daily until scouring resolves at which point stop the electrolytes.

If your calf stops sucking it is seriously ill. Consult your vet. If at all unsure, please ring your vet.

VACCINATION AND DRENCHING: Your calf should be vaccinated with a 5 in 1 vaccine at six weeks of age and then given a booster shot at 12 weeks. This vaccine prevents pulpy kidney, tetanus, black disease, malignant odema and blackleg.

Drench for worms from 6-8 weeks old unless otherwise advised by your vet. Pour-ons (down the backbone – from the base of the neck to top of tail) are the easiest method. Other options are oral or injected.

LICE CONTROL: During grooming examine your calf for lice. The neck, brisket and between the front legs are likely places to find them. If your calf has them, get a good louse powder (available from your vet) and apply it. Put some inside the cover too. Be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully when treating our calf. Do not use kerosene.

DAILY CARE:

- Feed your calf twice a day for best growth.
- Wash its face to remove any milk residue
- Walk it on a halter and lead and spend time with it.
- Brush it at least once a day.

GROOMING YOUR CALF: For a clean coat and healthy skin, regular brushing is a must. Your calf will become used to you at feeding time, so at the first sight of loose hair, brushing should start. Have a suitable brush on hand. Never pluck or trim the calf. Hopefully by Ag

day all loose hair from the first coat will be removed and the second coat will be fine and silky. Once or twice before Ag day a wash (providing the weather is fine and calm) may be necessary. Lukewarm water with a mild soap or shampoo should be used. Wash all over with an absorbent cloth (make sure you don't get soapy water in the calf's eyes). After the first wash, one rinse with clean lukewarm water will bring the desired result. Don't forget to do hooves, ears (wipe out with a damp cloth) and under the chin (where dried milk is likely to stick). It would pay to get into a habit of wiping milk from around the mouth after every feed. In a sheltered, sunny spot, rub the calf dry with a cloth and towel and brush the coat to restore hair to its correct direction. Place the cover back on the calf before nightfall.

DEHORNING: Certain cattle breeds will grow horns. These can be dealt with quite easily and inexpensively when the calf is young. A vet will be able to advise you on different methods, how humane they are, and which are the most effective.

POINTS TO REMEMBER:

Ensure that long hair under the tail is kept clean so no dags form.

Do not clip or shave your calf – it will be disqualified.

Brush your calf often to get a nice shiny coat and to remove loose hair.

Ensure the halter is loosened regularly or removed so it is not too tight otherwise it will wear the hair off around the neck.

PAPERWORK: your calf must be NAIT registered and have a nait ear tag. Please check with your vet or the farmer where you got your calf from.

PREPARING A CALF FOR AG DAY:

- During feed times pat and brush the calf while talking to it in a gentle and friendly manner. Spend time with the calf as this will assist in the development of trust and loyalty. Trust is a vital aspect that demands time and determination if the calf is to feel secure and confident working with you.
- About 3-4 weeks before Ag day is plenty of time to start leading your calf. Always lead it to feed, so that it knows there is going to be a reward for going with you. Once your calf is leading, try taking it to different places so that it gets used to strange surroundings. This will help on show day.

WAINUI SCHOOL AG DAY: Wash your calf on or before Ag Day (ensure it does not get cold) and take a bucket, brushes and an old towel to clean it if it is dirty when you arrive. Parents can assist with this. Take the calf's food and water requirements for the day. The calves are judged on Leading, Rearing and Type.

LEADING: The right hand should grip the rope, palm upwards, leaving a loop 10-15cm from the halter. This distance is very important and a child who releases the right-hand grip will be penalized. Hold excess rope in your left hand, knuckles up. You should always try to walk at the shoulder of the calf (neither should be pulling the other). When standing or moving, look straight ahead and keep your calf's head up. You could be penalized for leaning on the calf or touching it with your hands.

You should be careful when turning with your calf. It must be led around the pole. If you can, avoid twisting your hand to push the calf's jaw or using your elbow to push the shoulder -these offences will be penalized. Practice turning with your calf.

All control of the calf should be with the right hand on the lead. You should realise that this hand is the brake, steering wheel and an accelerator combined. Correct grip with this hand will maintain control. If you can, avoid tapping/nudging the calf to get it to move -this will be penalized too.

Stopping, except when required by the judge can be penalized.

Different judges treat different offences with different severity. The wisest plan is to eliminate all offences.

REARING: For rearing the judge is looking for a healthy appearance – evidence of correct feeding, clean and pliable skin, absence of parasites and a calf that is well groomed from head to tail.

TYPE: When calves are judged for type, they are judged against the standard for each breed.

For Judging type, calves are divided into three classes:

- Light Dairy (Jersey & Ayrshire)
- Heavy Dairy (Shorthorn & Friesian)
- Beef

In the ring:

- Listen well to what the judges say.
- Leading is the most important part of the programme.
- A successful round of leading shows the judge that you have built up a bond over the previous months. The constant attention and training show the trust your calf has towards you. You are demonstrating a partnership from effort and work.

Well done! Regardless of the results you are a success because you have begun to learn to take responsibility.

If you win a 1st, 2nd, 3rd, or 4th ribbon at Wainui School Ag day, you are eligible to enter the South Kaipara Group day. It is held on the First Friday of November at the Helensville Showgrounds. Please register with Mel at the school office after our school Ag day. For more information or questions on any of the above, please contact Kylie at kallen@wainui.school.nz