

CALVES

Below are some tips for raising a happy and healthy calf.



Calves must be born between 1 June and 31 August 2017.

'Early' Calves ~ 1st June to 15th July 2017

'Late' Calves ~ 16th July to 31st August 2017

The calf needs to be selected within 14 days of birth. Some of the qualities you will be looking for are:

For a Dairy Calf

A good even temperament
Good dairy type qualities.
A good strong muzzle and large open nostrils.
Eyes that are wide apart, full and bright.
A nice straight top line (back through the tail setting.)
A nice sleek neck with the shoulders blending into the chine (the bone along the back through the shoulders) set above the shoulder blades.
A long, thin tail.
A good long rib with good spacing between the ribs.
Good straight legs, no knocking.
Only four well placed teats.
made.

For a Beef Calf

A good even temperament.
Good beef type qualities.
A good strong muzzle and large open nostrils.
Eyes that are wide apart, full and bright.
A full, strong jaw.
Shoulders that are well covered, broad and round at the top.
A broad, long, straight back.
Thick, deep thighs.
Good straight legs, set wide apart.
The back legs should not knock together as it walks.
No skin blemishes.
Well placed teats.
The decision of leaving a male entire or to castrate must be



Once the calf is chosen you can begin to take responsibility for the care and feeding of it. As your pet becomes familiar with you looking after it, it will begin to accept training from you.

Feeding Programme

It is important that newborn calves receive several good feeds of colostrum within the first 24 hours. As well as protecting the calf against disease colostrum provides your calf with vitamin A and other proteins. After 3 days the calf can be removed from its mother and introduced to a milk replacer. Ancalf and Denkavit are two milk formulas that are available, and manufacturers feeding instructions should be followed. If whole milk is being used, it should be fed at the rate of 3-4 litres/day/calf for the first week. This can be increased by 1-2 litres per week to reach about 9 litres/day/calf at 6 weeks of age.

Additional feeding concerning hay, barley meal, cereals and meal rations produced by stock manufacturers, give your calf that extra boost and detailed information is available on these from Farm Supply stores.

They are very easily digested and assist rumen development. They can be introduced when the calf is about one week old. Hay also encourages rumen development. Calves will begin to nibble pasture and hay at about 14 days of age. Make sure that they have good quality feed. *Don't feed them poultry feed as these have meat products in them and can cause disease!*

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

Although calves will be on liquids until weaning, they will still require plenty of clean drinking water during that period. Always do the feeding of your calf yourself. Make sure that milk is warmed to blood heat (that is warm on your skin) when being fed. Do not overfeed, as scouring can result. Introduce your calf to brushing and grooming gradually. This can be done at feeding time.

Housing

Dry and draught free shelter is important. Cold, wet, windy weather will have an effect on your calf. A waterproof shed with clean dry bedding (preferably sawdust) is essential. An adequate cover will provide extra warmth. This can be made from a clean sack, or you may purchase one from Anchormart, Wrightson or NRM.

All calves are required by law to supply a TB declaration certificate and ear tag with herd ID. These can be obtained from the office and must be bought to Calf Club & Group Day.

Grooming Your Calf

For a clean coat and healthy skin, regular brushing is a must. Your calf will have become used to you at feeding time, so at the first sign of loose hair, brushing should start. Have a suitable brush on hand. Pay special attention to the neck and other parts not reached by the cover. Never pluck or trim the calf. Hopefully, by calf club day all loose hair from the first coat will be removed and the second coat will be fine and silky. Once or twice before field day a wash (providing the weather is fine and calm) may be necessary. Luke warm 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). Hooves, ears and under the chin (where dried milk is likely to stick) are places that need thorough washing. After the first wash, one rinse with clean lukewarm water will bring the desired result. 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.

