

### Calves are the Future

There are many ways to raise calves successfully. There are different styles of housing, bedding, feeding, monitoring health and monitoring growth. Any program that is raising healthy calves is a good program. A program that raises healthy calves and maximizes calf performance is an excellent program. Excellent calf programs do not follow the same protocols, but they do have certain things in common.



Consistency  
Quality  
Timeliness  
Knowledge



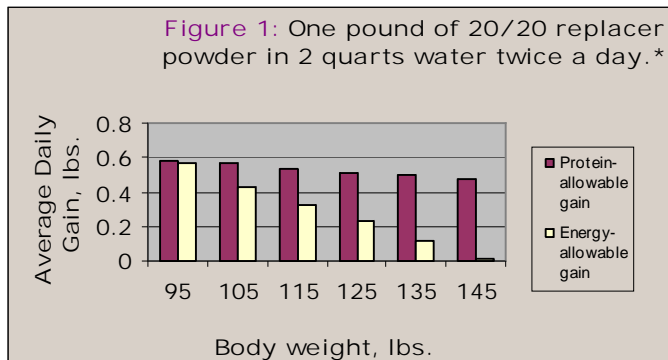
Work with your herd veterinarian to design the best program for you and your calves.

### Are you starving your calves?

8 oz of 20/20 milk replacer in 2 quarts water fed at each feeding (two times per day) will support 0.5 pounds of average daily gain (ADG) at 68 degrees Fahrenheit for a 100 pound calf.

see [figure 1](#)

- colder temperatures require increased energy consumption by the calf, and cause a decrease average daily gain
- as the calf gains weight, more energy is required just for maintenance, also decreasing ADG



12 oz of 20/20 milk replacer in 3 quarts warm water fed at each feeding (2 times per day) will allow 1 pound ADG from protein and 1.3 pounds ADG from energy for a 100 pound calf at 68 degrees Fahrenheit

see [figure 2](#)

- in our climate, there is no excuse to feed 16 oz powder (you will starve your calves)
- The ounce measurement is weight, not volume.
- Weigh your cup to find out how much you are actually feeding
- It is like flour – 1 cup sifted weighs much less than 1 cup unsifted



Well fed calves with adequate energy and protein intake are healthier. Any increase cost of milk replacer powder will be offset by increased growth rates and healthier calves (less diarrhea, respiratory disease and lower death loss.)  
[Hoard's Dairyman, January 25, 2009, page 60 How Your Calves Should Grow](#)

### Calf Starter Intake

Additional calf starter improves Average Daily Gain both on the energy and protein side, IF AND ONLY IF, free choice water is provided. The goal is to achieve ADG of 2 lbs per day past weaning.



Clean Starter

### Contented Calf



Fresh Water



### consistency

1. feed at the same times each day
2. feed the same mixture
3. develop a system that works and stick to it (calving protocols, colostrum collection, feeding, treating, weaning)
4. everything that comes into contact with a calf or her feed or her housing must be clean

### quality

1. feed a high quality, all milk protein replacer or pasteurized milk
2. provide fresh, clean water
3. provide high quality, fresh, clean calf starter/grain

### timeliness

1. get colostrum into the newborn before anything else gets in
2. plan time in the day to evaluate and treat, if necessary, any calf that looks off - don't leave it for your free time

### knowledge

1. learn what to look for
2. learn what to feed
3. learn when to provide supportive therapy and when to treat
4. learn to ask the right questions when you don't have all the answers

### What about cold weather?

- Give water and starter to calves, in all weather.
- Feed more milk replacer when the temperature gets colder.
- As they get bigger, calves need extra just for maintenance – they will either lose, maintain, or gain weight depending on how you feed them.

[Read More About It!](#)

[www.calfnotes.com](http://www.calfnotes.com)

[Cold Weather Energy Needs Calculator](#)

[Jim Quigley](#)

### Do you save anything with a soy protein milk replacer?

	All Milk Protein	Soy Protein Concentrate
Average Daily Gain	0.76 pounds	0.62 pounds
Gain-to-feed Ratio	0.55 pounds	0.47 pounds

Milk proteins still the "gold standard" in milk replacer  
(May 2006 Journal of Dairy Science)

Dairy Herd Management CALF & HEIFER RESOURCE CENTER

[www.dairyherd.com](http://www.dairyherd.com)

## Learn to Evaluate Overall Herd Health with Body Condition Scoring



Reference Point	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Physically Weak	yes	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
Muscle Atrophy	yes	yes	slight	no	no	no	no	no	no
Outline of Spine									
Visible	yes	yes	yes	slight	no	no	no	no	no
Outline of Ribs									
Visible	all	all	all	3—5	1—2	0	0	0	0
Outline of Hip & Pin Bones Visible	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	slight	no	no
Fat in Brisket & Flanks	no	no	no	no	no	some	full	full	extreme
Fat Udder & Patchy Fat Around Tail Head	no	no	no	no	no	no	slight	yes	extreme

[www.ext.vt.edu/pubs/beef/400-795/400-795.html#L2](http://www.ext.vt.edu/pubs/beef/400-795/400-795.html#L2)

Diarrhea is a constant health problem faced by all calf feeders. Early recognition and treatment is the key to successful therapy. Afebrile (without fever) calves with mild dehydration typically respond well to oral electrolytes.

Severely dehydrated calves that are acidotic usually die. Work with your herd vet to improve your assessment skills and devise a treatment protocol based on early recognition and treatment.

### Dealing With Diarrhea by Geof Smith, DVM

Hoard's Dairyman, p53, Jan. 25, 2009

How dehydrated is it?

Dehydration Attitude		Sunken Eye	Skin Tent Duration
Normal	Normal	none	none
Mild	Normal to slightly depressed (still standing)	2—4 mm	1—3 seconds
Moderate	Depressed	4—6 mm	2—5 seconds
Severe	Very Depressed can' stand—no suckle reflex	6—8 mm	5—10 seconds

Calves are like the canary in the coal mine. They are the first to let you know when there are issues that need to be addressed.



## Wyoming County Dairy Institute



### Registration Now Open For: "Manure and Nutrient Management"

**Classes Begin Tuesday, March 24, 2009**  
Classes To Be Held at Cornell Cooperative Extension—Warsaw, NY  
For Additional Information or to Register  
Call 585-786-2251 or Visit our Website

[www.WyomingCountyDairyInstitute](http://www.WyomingCountyDairyInstitute)

A copy of all newsletters are posted at:  
[www.perryvet.com](http://www.perryvet.com)

To place a farm supply order:

Phone (585) 969-9120  
Fax (585) 237-5544

Or, visit the Farm Store:  
Mon-Fri 7am - 5pm  
Sat 7am - Noon

Closed: New Years Day, Memorial Day,  
July 4th, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and  
Christmas



increased stress = increased requirements  
Don't add stresses to those that you cannot control. Spread these out as much as possible.

- rapid changes in the weather
- high pathogen exposure
- vaccination timing
- change in feed (timing, components)
- weaning
- housing change
- joining a group



### Spring Meeting!

Feeding Strategies With Today's Milk Pricing

Wednesday, March 25<sup>th</sup> at the Genesee River Restaurant

6pm registration

6:30pm dinner

7:15pm speaker

Michael Hutjens

Extension Specialist, Dairy  
Department of Animal Sciences  
University of Illinois



Check your mail—invitations coming soon!

