

Starter Concentrate: Feeding Pre-weaned Calves Checklist

How do your procedures measure up? Do they provide the opportunity for your pre-weaned calves to grow into their genetic potential?

Let's consider procedures for starter concentrate. Compare your routines with the standards in this checklist. When making this evaluation I like to use these scores: 1=never, 2=seldom, 3=often, 4=usually, and 5=almost always.

- _____ 1. During the entire pre-weaning period calves have ad-lib access to starter concentrate.

- _____ 2. Good quality starter concentrate is provided that is free of:
 - mold,
 - urine, and
 - dung

- _____ 3. Good quality starter concentrate is provided that is:
 - clean and
 - dry.

- _____ 4. Until calves are regularly eating about a 1/4L (about 110g) starter concentrate daily, the starter concentrate is replaced daily.

- _____ 5. Good quality starter concentrate is provided that is palatable, minimal fines content. Less than 5% will pass through a 0.8mm screen – about the size of window screening. At least 80% of the grain pellets are still whole after a day in a concentrate bucket.

- _____ 6. Access to starter concentrate is not restricted due to:
 - lack of palatability,
 - contamination,
 - being frozen, or
 - concentrate bucket or feed trough being too high to reach.

- _____ 7. When starter concentrate is fed in buckets, these buckets are separated from water buckets by enough space to minimize the amount of wet concentrate.

Sam Leadley, Calf & Heifer Management Specialist

Shirley Macmillan, United Kingdom Editor

smlleadley@yahoo.com www.atticacows.com

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