

## FEEDING PREWEANED CALVES: Starter Grain

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

Let's consider procedures for starter grain. 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 preweaning period calves have free-choice access to starter grain.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Good quality starter grain is provided that is free of:
  - mold,
  - urine, and
  - feces.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Good quality starter grain is provided that is:
  - clean and
  - dry.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Before calves are regularly eating at least a cupful of starter grain daily, the starter grain is replaced daily. [1 cup about equal to 1/4 pound (113 gm)]
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Good quality starter grain is provided that is palatable. Less than 5 percent will pass through a 0.8mm screen – about the size of window screening. At least 80 percent of the grain pellets are still whole after a day in a grain bucket.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Access to starter grain is not restricted due to:
  - lack of palatability,
  - contamination,
  - being frozen, or
  - grain bucket or feed trough being too high to reach.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. When starter grain is fed in buckets, these buckets are separated from water buckets by enough space to minimize the amount of wet grain. For pictures showing how this is done see [www.atticacows.com](http://www.atticacows.com) in the Calf Facts section, "Water:Grain Separation Pictures."

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