

AVA Newsletter

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Issue 2

It was ff-ff-ff-freezing!

Polar Plunge 2015 is safely in the books! It was a chilly morning on the shores of Lake Ontario and the water was filled with big ice chunks, but the fearless Teddy and his “Polar Bears” went in!



A HUGE thank you to all of you who donated to the Polar Plunge this year!! The Rochester Special Olympics raised \$299,273. Ted Schwytzer was the 6th highest fundraiser overall raising \$2,775! Dr. Susan, Dr. Eila, and Hannah all helped the team raise \$4,695! Thank You!



FOR SALE

Vermont Casting Resolute Acclaim wood stove. Four years old. Refurbished new refractory bricks. Owner upgrading to larger stove. \$700.

Bottle Feeding

By Sam Leadley

Bottle-feeding very young calves seems like such a simple task. Fill the bottle, stick on a nipple, offer it to a calf, calf drinks, job finished. Oh, but anyone who has bottle fed calves knows that it really doesn't work that way. Or, at least it doesn't work that way one hundred percent of the time.

Plan Ahead when cold weather bottle feeding

Are you are feeding more than one bottle at a time? Keep in mind that the ideal feeding temperature is the same as a calf's body temperature. That's about 102 degrees. How warm will the second or later bottle be after spending time feeding the previous ones? Planning ahead is essential. A five-gallon pail will hold up to four nursing bottles just fine. Add enough 120-degree water to keep things warm. Presto! Warm milk even in the fourth bottle. Of course, when the weather is extremely cold it makes sense to put a cover on the pail to retain the heat.

Monitoring the calf's drinking

How often do you insert nipple and your mind drifts off to someplace else? It's easy to do. But, especially with very young calves careful monitoring is essential. Now, of course your dairy does not have nipples with the ends cut open for sixty-second feeding of two quarts. But, just in case one might appear out of the blue, remember that there is a wide variation among calves in their ability to suckle. These cutout nipples allow guzzlers to knock back two quarts in nothing flat. Love them! We could even drop the bottle into a holder and they would still nurse okay.

In contrast the "sippers" don't seem to be able to suck in and swallow more than a tablespoonful at a time. Then they lose the nipple and can't figure out what to do next. Oh, man, is she ever going to finish? My experience suggests between five and ten percent of our very young calves are like this. Unfortunately if our nipple allows an excessive amount into a "sippers" mouth she can't swallow all of it. Some of the excess may trickle into her windpipe (trachea) at her next breath. She chokes. Not good. This increases the chances for her having respiratory illness in the near future.

This is when we should be monitoring suckling. If all goes well I drift off to dream about chocolate. If she chokes we need to stop feeding. Is the nipple opening too large? If so, replace it. One with a smaller hole (not one in which you can slip your thumb) may work better. She will tell you right away when she starts to nurse again. She either chokes or she doesn't.

If she continues to choke remember that calves can swallow uphill. Just lower the bottle below the top of her back. This assumes that you, like ninety-nine percent of bottle feeders, are holding the bottle up at a level convenient for you rather than the calf. The lower position may solve the choking problem as much as half of the time.