

NEWBORN CALF CARE

GOALS

- 1. Help the calf to adapt to her new environment.**
- 2. Help the calf maintain good health.**

LIVING OUTSIDE THE DAM

Help get a dry hair coat.

The dam will usually lick off the calf. We can finish the job with a couple of bath towels. Our goal is a fluffy hair coat that helps the calf adapt from 39° C. inside the dam to outdoor temperature.

In freezing weather, a clean draft-free warm place will help finish the manual-drying job. Examples would be a clean hutch with a heat lamp, a clean warming box with a heater.

Help the calf stand up.

If she is not up in the range of 15 to 30 minutes, provide assistance. By just helping her stand up we have jump-started her metabolism about four times the resting rate.

Help her get a good first meal soon after birth.

She needs lots of energy to adapt to this world outside her dam. Colostrum contains twice as much dry matter as whole milk. And, colostrum is high in both fat and protein to meet the calf's immediate needs after birth.

KEEPING HEALTHY

Help her keep away from adult cow manure.

As little as one teaspoonful of manure in her gut prior to colostrum feeding can be fatal. No manure meals.

Help her keep pathogens out of her umbilical cord.

Dip the navel with 7 percent tincture of iodine. Navel dipping:

- (a) cleans off the outside of the umbilical cord and the navel opening,
- (b) kills residual bacteria on the outside of the cord, inside the open end of the cord, and at the navel opening,
- (c) dries the umbilical cord tissue discouraging pathogen movement up the cord and into the liver.

Help her build adequate immunity through transfer of her dam's colostral antibodies into her blood.

Feed an adequate amount of good quality clean colostrum as soon as possible after birth. If the calf is unable to nurse use an esophageal tube feeder. If good quality colostrum is unavailable add an effective colostrum supplement to low quality colostrum or use a colostrum replacer.

There is no substitute for early feeding.

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