WET CALF HOUSING AND MANAGEMENT

Hugh Chester-Jones,
University of Minnesota
Southern Research and Outreach Center, Waseca

More details on Calf Housing Environment and Management are printed in the Appendix section of the proceedings. The information relates to bull and heifer calves.

This Presentation will outline housing options for wet calves and highlight key management areas.

Cost Distribution For Calves until Weaning (ICPA Study)

- Fixed: 7% ($0.20)
- Labor and Mgt: 40% ($1.19)
- Variable: 15% ($0.39)
- Feed: 38% ($0.99)

$2.78/day

Calf Housing Costs (New to Weaning)

- Group Pens: $170/day
- Home Built Calf Hutch: $140/day
- Greenhouse Calf Barn: $375/day
- Purchased Hutch: $350/day
- Post Frame Calf Barn: $300/day
- Calf Nursery: $200/day

Basic needs

- Dry bed
- Enough space
- Fresh air, low draft
- Access to fresh water
- Access to dry feed
- Non-competitive penmates (when grouping)
- Good footing

Adapted from Gawthrop, 2003
7th Annual PDHGA Conference, Green Bay

Disease Control Basics

- Reduce exposure
  - sanitation
  - isolation
  - medication
- Increase resistance
  - vaccination
  - nutrition
  - environment

Adapted from Gawthrop, 2003
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Sanitation
What does the calf touch?
- Bottles, feeders, gates, walls, waterers,

What touches the calf?
- Hands, boots, milk, water, feed, bedding, other calves

Adapted from Gawthrop, 2003 7th Annual PDHGA Conference, Green Bay

INDIVIDUAL HOUSING OPTIONS
Calf Hutches
Calf Condos
Inside Calf Pens (Frame-Steel Building; Fabricated Building, Renovated Barn)
Group Housing
Nursette in a Super Hutch Access to Outside Pen or Pasture
Automatic Group Feeding

WATER
Essential Nutrient for Calves

MANAGEMENT IDEAS TO CONSIDER (adapted from Hayes, 2003 7th Annual PDHGA Conference, Green Bay)

Housing systems
- Place calves in hutches/pens in order of age if possible or arrival at facility. If lose a calf do not fill this space as minimize pathogen exposure and also visual record of death loss;

- If use hutches - rotate ground that hutches are placed by year and season; so helps natural sanitation by sun and rain.
- Clean hutches or pen panels same day that calves are moved and let dry/rest as long as possible.
Group feeding systems can work if managed well.

RAISED STALLS
- Calves placed in stalls upon arrival.
- Need good air movement
- Challenge of disease contamination between stalls. If smaller group can go every other stall.

RAISED STALLS
- Expect some scouring first few days especially as FPT percentage is high for sale barn calves but less of a problem from direct on-farm pick-up
- Quite labor efficient but limited space for calves can be a concern.
- Usually we will move them out at 8 weeks of age 2-3 weeks after weaning to group pens.
FRAME STEEL BUILDINGS

ALL IN ALL OUT
MANAGEMENT
Stalls taken down for cleaning
PROTOCOL EXAMPLE
Pickup and Arrival at SROC Calf and Heifer Facility

Pickup Check: (calves 2 – 4 days old)
1. Make sure calf has a minimum of 3 colostrum feedings
2. Take only healthy heifer calves that walk
3. Observe owners calf/maturity area for cleanliness

Arrival Procedures and Checks
1. Check for infected navel cords
   a. If swollen – NuFlor or Pennicillin
   b. If wet, dip navel with iodine
2. Blood sample – serum protein and BVD carrier
3. Vaccinate (oral) TSV2
4. Record (document) any abnormalities/health problems
5. Bottle feed calf – first feeding
6. Weigh calf, hip height measurement

RECORD KEEPING IDEAS

Scherbring Calf Hook

FABRICATED SYSTEMS:
Feeding management:

- Proper storage racks and/or carts for bottles and nipples; larger operations use a dishwasher to clean equipment.
- Some farms have duplicate sets of buckets and nipples to allow for sufficient cleaning and drying time.
- Identify individual pens/hutches for calf treatments and if phase feeding milk program (markers, colored clips, or clothes pegs etc).
- Keep good records at all times.
POST WEANING AND TRANSITIONAL HOUSING FOR HOLSTEIN STEER CALVES

Calf housing costs
(Weaning to 6 months)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing Type</th>
<th>Cost per Day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fenced Pasture</td>
<td>$0.03/day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Super Hutch (Materials)</td>
<td>$0.08/day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchased Super Hutch</td>
<td>$0.17/day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition Barn</td>
<td>$0.24/day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kammel, 2000

MANAGEMENT IDEAS TO CONSIDER (adapted from Hayes, 2003 7th Annual PDHGA Conference, Green Bay)

Transition Housing:

- One of the most critical areas post weaning from individual housing to group pens unless use a pre-weaning group feeding system.

- If possible put calves in groups of 10 or less for socialization although it is appreciated that this is more challenging in larger operations.

- Maintain pre-weaning feeding program after moving to minimize stress adjustments.
Manure pack pole barn for steers

Open front group pens - Meiers, MN

Bedded every 2 days; 1/2 bale/pen
3 x 3 x 8 ft bales
Things to consider when selecting management and housing alternatives:

- Fundamental needs of the animal must be met.
- Designs should provide an optimum system for efficient labor and feeding management to maintain the quality of the replacement animal.
- There is often a trade off between labor and capital to meet goals and objectives of the calf enterprise.