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Weaning Nutrition

by Dr. Jeremy Martin, Ruminant Nutritionist

School is back in session and many children have recently experienced the stress of their first trip to school. Undoubtedly, both parents and children experience a certain level of stress the first day they have to go their separate ways. Perhaps it is not the perfect metaphor for weaning calves, but there are some similarities. Is it any wonder that the stress and exposure can lead to a rash of sickness in both cases? The following are suggestions for managing the weaning phase to improve profitability, quality of life, and reduce morbidity and mortality.

Research has proven time and again that getting calves off to a good start pays big dividends throughout their lifetime. The first step to getting calves started correctly is to have a plan. You should know what feed ingredients you will have on hand prior to receiving the cattle and what you may need to purchase. I know it sounds simple, but being adequately prepared to receive cattle is the first step that must be successfully completed. Discuss receiving strategies and intake targets with your nutritionist so you can monitor performance of incoming cattle.

Aside from being highly palatable, receiving rations should be nutrient dense since intakes will likely be low during the first few days, particularly on bawling calves. Rations for incoming cattle

should generally be at least 14.5% crude protein, 40% moisture or less, and 35 to 65% roughage. Fermented forages should be introduced slowly, after the calves are readily coming to the bunk. We recommend receiving cattle with high quality grass hay in the bunk, and top-dressing 5 lbs of dry matter of starter ration over the hay 4-12 hours later. Within 3-4 days, the hay should



be completely replaced by the starter ration.

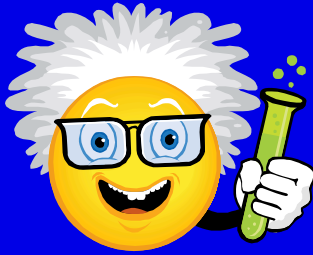
Nutrient intake is a direct function of dry matter intake, so achieving target dry matter intakes is essential for keeping cattle healthy and getting adequate protein and energy into them. Healthy fresh calves should achieve the target intake within 7 to 10 days of receiving. High-risk cattle with inherent health issues may take substantially longer to achieve target intakes. There may be some benefit in limiting high stress cattle to 80% of the target intake so sick cattle can more easily be identified. Please discuss this option with your GPLC nutritionist to insure the diets provide

adequate nutrient intake at 80% of the target intake.

An antibiotic such as CTC can greatly reduce pulls and improve gains. Feeding 1gram/cwt of body weight for 5 days will effectively fight most shipping fever. Start feeding CTC after the calves are bunk broke but before they get sick (around day 4). Then give them a week without any antibiotic. This procedure can be repeated multiple times depending on the health and relative risk of the calves.

Chelated trace minerals, some direct-fed microbials, and Bio-Moss have all been proven to reduce morbidity and mortality of freshly-weaned calves. Volumes of research are available illustrating the benefits of a quality chelated trace mineral supplement in receiving cattle. Therefore, we recommend using chelates in receiving programs, and do so regularly. Deciding whether to use other additives is not quite so easy and depends on the situation, management, and cattle. All of these products add costs, but that cost is recovered multiple times through reduced morbidity and mortality and increased performance.

Talk your Field Marketer and find out how Sioux Nation and Great Plains Livestock Consulting can help develop a program that can add value to your operation.



“The effectiveness of flushing is influenced by 4 factors: age, breed, body condition and stage of breeding season.”



Feed Testing and Timely Reminders

There are a multitude environmental and management factors that affect the nutrient composition of feedstuffs.

Although a nutritionist can formulate rations using “book values” an analysis of the actual feeds is always preferred.

When provided with an accurate feed analysis your nutritionist can formulate a more economical and balanced diet.

An important part of getting an accurate feed analysis involves taking a representative sample.

Your Sioux Nation Field Marketer is available to sample your feedstuffs and have them analyzed. Give them a call today.

Timely Reminders:

- Don't forget to give your cows and heifers their scour vaccine
- Now is the time to schedule your pregnancy checking
- Fall is a great time to worm your horses.
- Now is the time to make sure your fountains are working properly. Sioux Nation sells Ritchie, Mirafount and Bohlman fountains and parts. Don't wait until the snow flies!
- Take the time now to tend to any fences in need of repair.
- Still in need of a silage tarp? Sioux Nation carries Raven tarps. They are two ply 6 mil.

Flush for Improved Conception Rates

No matter the economic situation it is always a good idea to take advantage of management strategies that improve the profitability of your operation. One management strategy available to sheep producers is Flushing.

Flushing involves increasing the plane of nutrition for ewes 2-3 weeks prior to breeding and 3 weeks into the breeding season.

By putting the flock on an increasing plane of nutrition the body responds by increasing its ovulation rate.

We continue flushing into the breeding season to ensure the fertilized eggs attach successfully to the uterine wall.

The effectiveness of flushing is influenced by 4 factors: age of ewe, breed, body condition score and stage of breeding season.

Age: Mature ewes respond better to flushing than ewe lambs.

Breed: The more prolific breeds respond less to flushing.

Body Condition Score: Flushing

does not work as well on extremely thin or overly fat ewes. Ewes in moderate to good body condition will respond by releasing a greater number of eggs during ovulation. This increases your chances of having multiple births and improves the survivability of the subsequent embryos.

Flushing can be done by providing ewes .5-1 lb of grain per day or by moving them to a better quality pasture. For more information talk to your Field Marketer.

Fermented Liquid Feeding Conference High Lights

- 1) Fermentation success relies on the early inoculation of byproducts
- 2) Phosphorus additions should be able to be greatly reduced¹. We have already known about this but the latest University research confirms it.
- 3) Fermented liquid feeding (FLF) success with Fermentationexperts is occurring in many European countries as well as Ohio.
- 4) Fermented inoculant from byproducts will become a limited opportunity in Europe soon because of the great success of this technology.
- 5) Yeast control is a constant topic of conversation by users of the technology. This is a new item for discussion for us here in the USA.
- 6) Short term use of fermented liquid whey without the immediate need for liquid feeding equipment exists in some barns.²
- 7) There continues to be great opportunity in the USA in areas where by-product availability exists. Early adapters will be the ones that, in addition to the FLF production economic benefits, will be able to capture reduced feed cost benefits.
- 8) Vitamin/Trace-mineral optimization is done by a nutritionist experienced with FLF such as our own Dr. Rob Fischer