

Livestock and Dairy

Facts About Care of Farmers' Feeders and Aids to Greater Milk Production.

You can't let calves rustle anyway they like if you want to have fine dairy stock. A calf is just the same as a child. Neglect it when young and you will rue it when it's old. If you want to get some live, up-to-the-minute ideas on how to care for the young calves in the dairy read Professor Blanchard's article herewith.

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THE best bunch of grade heifer fall calves that the writer ever saw were fed and cared for under the direction of a girl about 14 years of age. A part of the girl's compensation was to be her choice of one of the calves at the age of six months. One condition of the agreement was that there should be no sickness among the calves caused by mistakes in feeding or care. The girl won and secured the calf, which she sold for \$50.

These calves were never neglected, and were kept under clean and sanitary conditions. They were fed regularly, especial care being taken not to over feed, so they were kept thrifty, increasing in weight every day. While feeding, the calves were fastened in calf stanchions, and at the end of six months the girl knew just the amount of feed—milk, hay, grain, etc., that each one had eaten. The feed cost was about \$12.00 per calf and the labor averaged about six minutes per day per calf—less than 20 hours labor per calf for the six months. All of the feeds were raised on the farm, excepting a few pounds of flaxseed meal, and a sack of shorts that was fed while teaching the calves to eat grain.

Raise Well-Born Calves

Only the well-born calves should be raised for dairy purposes. Premature births ought to be discarded. Such calves very rarely develop into profitable cows. They are usually lacking in nerve force, vigor and stamina. The calf worth raising will have no less than four teeth completely cut through the gums at birth and should have four teats of reasonable size and placed widely apart. It is desirable that the heifer develop a large and well shaped udder, which properly placed teats promise.

The calf intended for the dairy should be well cared for and at no time neglected. It is not much of a trick to raise a calf that will develop into a producer of 3,000 to 4,000 pounds of milk or 150 to 200 pounds of butter fat per year, provided the parent stock were good cows.

Such low producers may result from improper practices in feeding, thereby causing digestive disorders, limiting the calf's ration to skim milk alone after the first week, feeding in dirty pails, confining the calf to a wet and unsanitary stall, and weaning the calf from the skim milk and turning to grass at about three months of age, to rustle a very large part of its living until its first calf is born.

Succumbs to Neglect.

Yet many farmers persist in raising their calves along the lines indicated above, and at the same time know very well that any other farm crop so neglected would not be worth harvesting. The calf succumbs to neglect and mistakes just as surely and permanently as do the other crops of the farm. With the other crops, however, one can correct his mistake the following year and thus considerably reduce his loss, but with the calf years elapse before the loss becomes evident, and many years more will be needed to repair the damage done. It is therefore equally important that the feeding and care of a calf from birth if not before birth, be proper and right, as it is that the breeding shall have been right. Those cows that are making money for their owners today were not greatly neglected and allowed to shift for themselves as calves.

To be profitable to the dairy farmer the cow must produce from 5,500 to 8,000 pounds of milk that shall contain

not much less than 300 pounds of butter fat.

Such cows are generally produced and reared along the following lines. Assuming the calf to be well bred and otherwise satisfactory at birth, many successful dairymen find it to be the better practice to permit the calf to suck the dam for its first feed.

The first milk—the colostrum—possesses both medicinal and nutritive qualities important to the calf's greatest needs.

Remove Calf Promptly.

The calf ought then to be promptly removed to a well ventilated, dry and sanitary stall, away from the dam. The stall should have a window to admit the sunlight and the floor ought frequently to be covered with dry and fresh bedding. After several hours and when the calf becomes hungry it should be taught to drink from the pail, by coaxing and not by forcing methods. Any practice that would be calculated to develop a stubborn and timid disposition in the calf ought carefully to be avoided. Cultivate the calf's affections. Offer the calf the dam's milk freshly drawn. By placing a finger wet with the milk on the calf's nose and repeating a few times if necessary the calf will follow with its nose the finger into the pail and begin to drink. By practicing patience the feeder soon has the calf taught to drink from the pail and with continued kindness no further trouble need be feared in this matter.

The calf is a delicate creature and should be nursed with great care in order that digestion troubles may be wholly avoided. Generally such troubles are produced either by over feeding or feeding in unclean pails.

Sometimes the dam's milk is very rich, when only a little should be given, and thus avoid a bad case of indigestion.

At all times it is better to under feed a little than to over feed. Feed whole milk for about ten days and then gradually change to skim milk. At three weeks the whole milk may safely be omitted.

During the change a little flaxseed jelly can be added to the milk, beginning with a tablespoonful and ending with a half a pint, at a feed. This jelly is prepared by cooking the flaxseed meal in water in the proportion of about one to six by measure. Small calves ought at first to receive not more than three to four quarts of whole milk while large calves may receive from five to six quarts daily.

The quantity may in each case be gradually increased until at the age of six weeks the amount may have doubled which may well be the limit. Skim milk had best be fed as soon as it comes from the separator while it still retains the animal heat.

Cold milk is dangerous feed for the calf under four or five months of age. Feed skim milk warmed at 90 to 95 degrees relying upon the thermometer, not the finger. Do not feed the calves milk from tubercular cows. Creamery skim milk ought to be treated before being fed to calves or pigs by heating for 20 to 30 minutes at a temperature of 150 to 160 degrees Fahrenheit—to kill the bacteria present in the milk.

Three Feeds Daily.

Divide the milk into three feeds daily for the calf for the first week, afterwards two feeds daily. Feed milk until the calf is six months old. At five or six weeks of age the calf will eat hay and grain. Let it have all it will eat of both, after drinking its milk. Do not feed the grain in the milk. Equal parts by measure of bran, corn meal and ground oats makes a first class grain mixture for the calf. Sprinkle a little of the grain on the mouth or tongue of the calf a few times when it will soon become to like it and eat freely. Most any bright hay will be relished. Only feed what the calf will eat up clean and thus avoid having the calf form the objectionable habit of muzzling over the feed in search of the choicest bits.

The calf after two or three months of age should be provided with roughage such as green clover, alfalfa, oats, mixed grasses or roots. Feed but a little at a time at first, increasing gradually until the calf gets all that it will eat

up clean. Keep salt and fresh water before the calf daily from the first.

Feed in Stall.

By all means do all the feeding of the calves in stalls or stanchions. These save labor and feed, and are a great aid in the prevention of sickness and the forming of bad habits like sucking ears, teats, etc., and are not expensive. After a very few days, at feeding time, the calves will be found waiting in the stanchions. They are first offered their milk after which the grain and hay is given them. Later they are released, when they will have forgotten the natural desire to suck and tease each other. Wean the calves from milk at six months of age, continue feeding oats in some form, and in the absence of good pasture feed them soiling crops liberally. Silage, roots and hay should be fed along similar lines as to the dairy cow. Breed the heifer at the age of 16 to 18 months. Continue to feed her for growth and the fullest development, being careful that at no time she becomes stunted. As freshening time approaches handle her frequently, much as if she was producing milk, and thus gradually accustom her to the changes that are to come. The heifer's disposition when she becomes a cow has been very largely moulded by the care taken. Kind and gentle treatment generally develops a kind and docile disposition. On the contrary, harshness and cruelty insures a kicking and vicious animal, resenting every questionable incident about the stables by holding her milk, and becoming generally disorderly.

Indigestion and Scours.

There are but very few dairymen and stockmen who have not had more or less experience with digestion troubles and scours among their animals—especially the calves. Under natural and sanitary conditions calves usually remain healthy. Indigestion is generally the result of mistakes or carelessness of the feeder, such as wet and dirty pens, irregularity in feeding, over feeding, cold milk, sour milk, dirty pails, and the like. The obvious thing to do is for the feeder not to make mistakes and to nurse the calf with much care. Common scours follow indigestion, hence

the thing that will prevent indigestion prevents the common scours.

When the calf begins to feed daintily, mess with its feed, the eye usually begins to lose its brilliancy, its hair begins to stare or stand on end, and the calf's general demeanor begins to change. The calf ought now to receive immediate attention. Give two raw eggs, shell and all by placing one at a time in its mouth, and forcing the jaws closed with the hands, thus crushing the egg. If the calf should begin to scour give one ounce of castor oil with a teaspoonful of cerolin and 20 grains of sub-nitrate of bismuth. Repeat the bismuth and cerolin with a cup of strong coffee and flaxseed tea every four hours.

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