



Raising Dairy Replacements Objectively

From the doctors desk...Dr. Mark Fox

The Value of Data Based On Farm Decisions

A great presentation was delivered at the recent 2010 Tri-State Dairy Nutrition Conference by Dr. Alex Bach (Dept of Ruminant Production IRTA, Spain)

He emphasized that replacement heifers not only define the long-term future of the dairy, but also represent close to 10% of the costs of milk production.

Some of Dr. Bach's key "take-home" messages starting from the calf were,

1. Colostrum management and environmental cleanliness are the backbone strengths to minimize health issues in calves.
2. Nutrition, starting from the newborn should enhance the ability to grow. Heifers are much more efficient when young to respond in overall growth to proper nutrition. We are seeing great response to higher planes of nutrition (higher energy/protein) starting with the milk-fed calf.
3. Weaning may be optimized with minimal stress by moving calf from individual hutch to small group (ex 6-8 calves in small pen) while reducing milk feeding to once/day for one week. Grouped calves were fed starter in elevated troughs and consumed higher starter intake than if weaned within individual pen. Grouped calves tend to "teach" and "reach" for more feed during the weaning phase. This allomimetic (eating as a group) feeding behavior will persist her entire life. Cross-sucking was not a problem in these trials.
4. Slower growing calves (health issues earlier in life) seem to "catch-up" better if allowed to stay back with younger animals while pen mates are moved up to next stage.
5. Breed heifers to calve at approximately 22 mo of age. Breeding body weight should be approx 55-60% of target weight at calving.
6. Higher conception rates may be achieved by waiting two weeks after introduction into breeding pen. (allows for social issues to subside, increases fertility)
7. Typically, will need to increase energy in cold weather to maintain growth rates and fertility.

This entire paper can be reviewed on the web at www.tristatedairy.osu.edu Look under the heading of 2010 proceedings.

We hope your heifers are doing well and will reward your dairy with great performance as adults. They are the future herd.

Enjoy your "Dairy Month" of June! We are proud of the industry.

You may have noticed your veterinarian using a new product called Resflor. Resflor is a Nuflor/Banamine combo. We are no longer carrying straight Nuflor at the clinic. If you have further questions please consult your veterinarian.

DROP SHIP - Watch your "fluid" supply (Calcium/dextrose) on your dairy. Unfortunately we are seeing sporadic availability again. Clostridium Type A is awaiting renewal by the FDA, we will not be able to fulfill your orders until further notice, I heard today that the process is making progress and may be within the month of June. Our clinic supply is gone as well. For those of you whom use the product regularly I have some on back order for you.

We are seeing a lot of vaccine backorders right now. All Titanium vaccine is suspended, Cattlemaster, Virashield, and Triangle 9 Type II BVD are all on backorder. I will update as more information is available.