



From the Dr's desk.....Dr. Jarrett Gordon

Fall has come once again to Michigan's Thumb. We're already seeing the usual rash of calf problems. As the cooler air adds to the stress on calves, the moisture in the environment also helps other organisms multiply. It can add up to "system overload" in the calves in a hurry. Now is the time to re-evaluate your calf raising practices and identify areas where improvements can be made. At times this starts to sound like a broken record, but the simple things can really make a difference.

First, we must all remember that calves need more calories as the air temperature drops. It is preferred to add volume to the feedings, not just increasing the concentration of the milk replacer. Three quarts of milk twice a day is now the standard. (a gallon per feeding is possible) We can't have these calves on a starvation diet and expect them to thrive. The other preferred option would be to feed two quarts three times a day. Don't neglect this most important aspect of calf feeding. Some other considerations are the temperature and concentration of the milk replacer. Be sure to follow the manufacturer's recommendations for mixing. You want the milk to be around 100 degrees F when it makes it to the calves. Be very consistent on the concentration of the mix and the timing of feeding. We see lots of Type A clostridium episodes when the milk concentration/timing is fluctuating.

The next area to remember is that calves need deep bedding and draft-free housing. They can withstand plenty of cold air as long as they can "nest" in deep straw and not have to fight chills from drafty hutches/pens. Keep the stalls well-bedded and dry. The extra expense for straw will pay for itself in increased calf survivability.

Another aspect to keep in mind is the parasite load. These include lice, coccidia and worms. Flies become much less of a concern this time of year. If you aren't sure if your calves have lice or internal parasites, have your veterinarian check them. For lice it's just a visual inspection. For the internal parasites, a simple fecal exam can show us if they have a problem. Treatments can be prescribed based on the results of these tests. Every step we take to decrease the stress load on our calves will help them survive and thrive through another Michigan winter.

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As I mentioned last month our staff went through training to ensure your privacy is protected within the boundaries of our business. Please remember if you use us as a credit reference we will need documentation with your signature or verbal approval. I am still amazed how much fraud is happening to people I know. We need to be more conscious than ever with our financial and private information. We keep any personal information under lock & key and this area is limited to certain employees. We will continue to take payments via credit card over the phone. We prefer not to keep this information on hand and you will need to call in monthly for this service.

The Pfizer acquisition of Fort Dodge is complete. Most Fort Dodge products were sold off to Boehringer Ingelheim. We shouldn't see any issues with product availability.

Have a safe and Happy Thanksgiving everyone.....Helen