

LD
5655
A762
no. 286
C.2



Dairy Guidelines

PREPARED BY EXTENSION DAIRY SCIENCE SPECIALISTS

Series 286 - July 1966

VEAL PRODUCTION

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE
AND STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

C. E. Baylor, Assistant Extension Dairy Specialist
J. T. Huber, Assistant Professor, Dairy Science
V.P.I., Blacksburg, Virginia

Raising veal calves can be a profitable enterprise at times when meat prices are relatively high. Veal production is, however, a specialized industry. A producer should not go into it without studying the situation and learning as much as he can about the total business, from feeding and care of the calf through marketing the finished animal.

Selection of Calves

Careful and proper selection of baby calves for veal production may mean the difference between profit and loss.

- - -

Select healthy, vigorous calves free of infections or physical defects. Calves subjected to stress of moving through public marketing channels could be exposed to diseases and are more susceptible to disease.

- - -

Calves should weigh at least 85 lbs. at birth. The initial body weight of the calf partially determines time required to reach desired market weight and finish. It is seldom profitable to feed the amount of milk or high-energy replacer necessary to get a small calf to the desired weight and condition.

- - -

Either males or females of larger dairy breeds or dairy-beef crosses will produce desirable veal. Males will usually gain more rapidly than females.

- - -

If you purchase calves, you should be certain they were fed colostrum milk for at least the first 3 days of life. Colostrum is higher in disease-fighting antibodies, vitamins, and protein than regular milk, thus giving the calf a good start in life.

Markets

Know your local market situation--markets will vary from area to area.

Know the local market grades for veal as well as best weight and degree of finish required for each grade.

Know the prices paid for each market grade.

Know which market grade is in most demand.

With this knowledge you can adapt your veal production program to fit the market.

Housing for Veal Calves

Housing requirements for veal calves are similar to those for herd replacements. They can be met with various systems if the pens are: (1) dry; (2) draft free; (3) well ventilated; (4) well lighted; (5) easy to clean and sanitize.

Calves can stand considerable cold provided they are dry and draft free. A separate pen (24 sq. ft.) for each calf will prevent sucking after milk feeding. Tie-stalls on slatted floors are satisfactory in warm barns.

Feeding Veal Calves

Calves must receive colostrum for the first 3 days of life, and longer if possible. After this, whole milk or a high-energy milk replacer may be used.

Unless whole milk and/or high-energy replacer made from milk are the chief feeds, the veal carcass may not have a sufficient degree of fatness, may lack desired whiteness of fat and desired light-colored flesh to command higher prices. Replacers made from vegetable meals (oats, soybeans, etc.) are not recommended for veal production.

Age (days)	Feed	<u>Veal Calf Feeding Schedule</u>	
		Amount(1)(2) (lbs. powder) per feeding	Whole Milk(3) (lbs. per feeding)
1- 4	Colostrum	--	--
5- 7	High-energy replacer	.6	4.5
8-11	High-energy replacer	.7	5.5
12-15	High-energy replacer	.9	7.5
16-19	High-energy replacer	1.0	8.5
20-23	High-energy replacer	1.2	10.0
24-29	High-energy replacer	1.3	10.5
30-39	High-energy replacer	1.5	12.5
40-49	High-energy replacer	1.8	15.0
49-on	High-energy replacer	2.0	16.5

(1) Recommended amount of water to add: 1 part powder to 4 parts water; or, 1 lb. with 7 pints of water; or, follow manufacturer's recommendations on container. These are feeding-rate guides and may be reduced or increased depending upon the individual calf and the possibility of scouring.

(2) F. M. Crane, M. H. Hansen, Land-O-Lakes Creameries, Inc., Minneapolis, Minn.

(3) J. T. Huber, V.P.I. Dairy Science Department, Blacksburg, Virginia.

Veal calves should not be fed grain or forage because these will reduce the rate of gain and discolor the fat and flesh. Calves fed on whole milk or high-energy replacer should be expected to gain up to $2\frac{1}{4}$ lbs. per day with feed conversion of 1 lb. gain for 10 lbs. of milk or 1 lb. of gain for each $1\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. of replacer powder.

Some authorities advocate providing fresh drinking water once daily for veal calves. This is permissible if it does not reduce the intake of milk or high-energy replacer below recommended levels.

Sanitation

Stalls or pens used for veal calf production should be so designed and constructed to be easily cleaned and sanitized between groups of calves, as well as meeting criteria mentioned under housing. Contaminated pens can be a major source of infection.

Utensils used for feeding veal calves must be kept clean and sanitized with hot water, steam, or chemical following each feeding. Contaminated feeding utensils and over-feeding can be major causes of digestive disturbances and infections which weaken the calf, reduce the rate of gain, and increase mortality.

Diseases of Veal Calves

It is far better to prevent disease by good management practices than to treat an ill animal.

Over-feeding milk or milk replacer is the most common cause of scouring in young calves. If diarrhea is observed, reduce the feeding rate by one-half until feces return to normal, then gradually increase feeding rate until recommended amounts are being fed.

Always keep a rectal thermometer in the calf barn. When a calf shows symptoms of being sick (scours, dull appetite, warm and dry nose, or is listless) check its temperature. If above normal (101°F.), do not attempt a home remedy, but call your veterinarian immediately for a diagnosis and proper treatment. Early treatment is essential to reducing death loss and spread of disease to other animals.

Isolate sick animals, preferably in a separate barn.

If you purchase calves from local markets, it is advisable to work out a program with your veterinarian to give preventive injections of antibiotics. Isolate newly purchased animals until you are certain they are disease free.

