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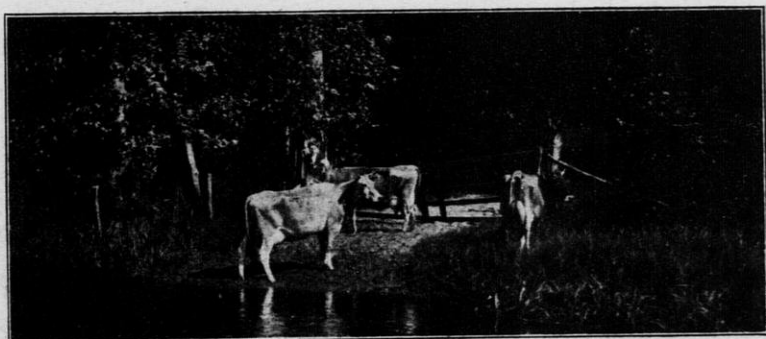
WISCONSIN BANKERS' FARM BULLETIN

The Growing of Dairy Heifer Calves

By

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OF WISCONSIN



SOME OF WISCONSIN'S DAIRY PRODUCTS.

Starting with little capital and a number of ordinary cows, an upper Wisconsin dairyman in a few years' time developed a herd of profit producers. He used only bred-for-production sires and grew well the best heifers from his best producing cows.

File this bulletin where you can find it

Distributed by

Wisconsin Bankers' Association

W. A. von Berg,
Chairman Agricultural Committee,
Mosinee

George D. Bartlett,
Association Secretary,
Pabst Building, Milwaukee

Home Grown Heifers Are Best

The easiest, cheapest and best way to get a profit-producing dairy herd is to grow it.

Why Raise Heifers?—Some of the reasons for the home raising of heifers are:—

It costs less to raise heifers than it does to buy cows;

The home-raised heifers generally develop into better and more profitable cows than most of those which can be purchased;

The herd is better safeguarded from such contagious diseases as tuberculosis and abortion;

The dairyman is enabled to secure a herd of cows of uniform breeding, individuality and ability to produce profitably;

A comparatively young herd may be kept and from time to time cows may be sold at good prices;

The home grown herd is most satisfactory in every way.

Some Calf Needs—To grow into a profit producer the heifer should be properly fed and handled from birth. The growing calf needs an abundance of pure, fresh air and sunlight, a dry, comfortable place in which to rest, protection from vermin and disease, and kind treatment throughout.

Stables with good ventilation and abundance of sunlight can be provided at but little increased cost.

Feed the Calf Well—It is of the utmost importance that the calves which are kept to recruit the herd be well fed from the very start. Even before the calf is born the cow should be given a well balanced ration suitable for keeping her in perfect health and in condition to produce a profitable flow of milk. Dairymen have found that it pays to give the cow from six weeks to two months of rest just prior to freshening. This allows her to use her feed for the development of the foetus and the building up of her strength.

Feed the Young Calf Often—From birth until the calf is six weeks old is the delicate age. For the first two or three days the calf is left with its dam. It gets the first milk or colostrum which nature has prepared to start the action of the digestive organs. If the calf fails to get the colostrum, a dose of castor oil or some other substitute is necessary.

When it becomes hungry enough to drink without much coaxing, it is given, three or more times daily, from two to four pounds of the dam's milk. The weaker the calf the oftener it should be fed. The

amount of milk is gradually increased, pains being taken not to over-feed the calf. The pails from which it is fed are kept scrupulously clean and the milk is fed at about the temperature at which it is drawn. At about two weeks of age, after it has had its milk, the calf will begin to chew hay and a pinch of grain, if these feeds are offered in small quantities and in fresh condition.

Don't Give Too Much Skim Milk—It is well to feed the calf whole milk until it is three to four weeks of age, when for a time skim milk is substituted for whole milk. By the time the calf is six weeks old it can be given from 15 to 18 pounds of milk a day, fed in two regular feeds. The allowance of grain and hay also can be gradually increased. If at first but the leaves of silage are placed before the calf it will soon learn to eat this excellent succulence.

When Calves Are Often Neglected—The calf is often very much neglected from the time it is six until it is twelve months of age. It is best to keep and feed the calf in a clean stable during the first year of its life. In summer to protect it from the hot scalding sun it may be turned out in shady paddocks for exercise. It pays well to continue feeding skim milk and from six to eight pounds of silage, good hay and grain given at regular times, night and morning. Left to rustle for themselves at this age, heifer calves often fail to grow sufficiently to develop into profitable cows.

During the second summer the heifers can be given good pasture and water and hay, if necessary, to keep them constantly growing. The second winter they do well if fed daily eight to ten pounds of alfalfa or clover hay, 12 to 20 pounds of silage, and two to three pounds of a good grain mixture.

Make the Best, Better—At the age of 16 to 20 months the well grown heifers should be bred to the best pure bred dairy sire it is possible to secure. Do not be alarmed if dairy heifers appear to be fleshy. If they have been selected from the right kind of cows and are by good dairy sires they will transfer the flesh on their backs to fat in the pail when they come into milk and the dairyman will be well repaid for all it has cost to grow and keep them in good condition.

Grain Rations Calves Like—With hardly an exception, oats may well constitute the greater portion of grain fed dairy calves. In many instances, they are fed alone, but many dairymen also feed bran, corn, barley, hominy or oil meal with the oats, making a variety of two to four kinds of feed in the mixture. A mixture by weight of 50 parts oats, 30 parts wheat bran, 10 parts corn meal and 10 parts oil meal, has been found to be satisfactory. This mixture is fed in quantities ranging from a small handful at the time the calf first receives any grain, to an amount not exceeding two and one-half to three pounds daily up to the time the heifer produces her first calf. Although many prefer the freshly ground grain the oats are generally fed.

Some Information and Suggestions—Calves should be given pure fresh water daily.

They should have free access to salt at all times.

All changes in feed should be made gradually.

Foam which forms on separator skim milk should never be fed. It is likely to cause indigestion and scours, bloat or other trouble.

Calves should be separated or fastened in stanchions when given their milk and fed dry grain immediately after the milk. This will tend to prevent them from getting the bad habit of sucking one another.

The stables should be cleaned regularly and kept dry.

If the stable is provided with a concrete floor it will be worth while to have the damp cold concrete overlaid with inch boarding.

Cold draughts of air in the stable should be avoided.

In summer it is well to darken the stable to give protection from flies and to keep it as cool as possible.

Young calves should never be exposed to a hot scalding sun.

Watch calves and keep them free from lice. Thoroughly washing or dipping calves with a five per cent solution of some of the coal tar disinfectants, and repeating the washing after ten days, is the most effective means of destroying lice.

Aim to do everything possible to keep calves gaining in live weight at the rate of 1.5 to 2 pounds daily.

Avoid calf scours by keeping the heifers in clean, well-lighted and well-ventilated quarters and feeding them regularly and properly. If any indications of scouring are seen reduce the feed and give from two to four tablespoons of castor oil mixed with one-half pint of milk. In from four to six hours, or at once if necessary, give one teaspoonful of a mixture of one part salol and two parts sub-nitrate of bismuth mixed with one-half pint of milk. The salol and sub-nitrate of bismuth mixed in the proper proportion can be secured from any druggist.

Wetting the navel of the new born calf with a 1 to 500 solution of bichloride of mercury, is considered a safeguard against contagious scours.

If for any reason skim milk is not available, whole milk should be fed from three to four months, pains taken to feed choice grain and hay and later silage. The whole milk can be gradually reduced as the calf learns to eat more grain and hay.

It requires more or less whole and skim milk and the utmost care to raise calves successfully on whey. After calves have been raised to five or six weeks on whole milk and more or less skim milk, 10 to 14 pounds of fresh, sweet whey fed daily with the best of hay and choice grain mixture will grow calves, but as a general rule, not as successfully as skim milk.