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The Banker-Farmer

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News Bulletin

A Little Journal of Agricultural
Information for the Farmer

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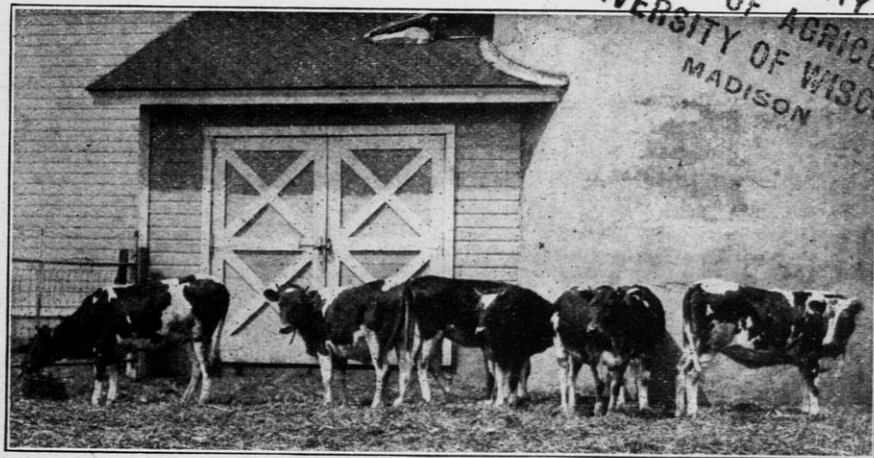
BULLETIN No. 46

JULY, 1924

RAISING THE DAIRY CALF

By GEO. C. HUMPHREY,

College of Agriculture, Madison



WELL GROWN GRADE GUERNSEY HEIFERS AT ONE YEAR OF AGE.

Compliments of

College of Agriculture, University of Wisconsin

MADISON, WIS.

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RAISING THE DAIRY CALF

By GEO. C. HUMPHREY,
College of Agriculture, Madison

Dairymen of Wisconsin have a two-fold opportunity in raising choice dairy heifer calves. On the average dairy farm well grown heifers frequently increase the returns from feed and labor by taking the place of poor cows. Well established markets for dairy cattle also enable dairymen to sell choice surplus stock at good prices. It will pay the dairymen of every community to organize a campaign for raising better dairy calves.

WELL RAISED DAIRY CALVES

Grow to full size.

Reach maturity at a comparatively early age.

Possess capacity for feed and profitable milk production.

Have vigor, constitution and health.

Are profitable producers of calves and milk at 26 to 30 months of age.

Command highest prices from buyers.

SELECTION IMPORTANT

It is quite impossible to raise a poor calf successfully for dairy purposes. Too much importance cannot be placed upon the selection of calves by bred-for-production sires and out of the best cows of the herd.

A calf from a cow which has been carefully dried off six weeks before date of calving has a better start in life than a calf out of a cow which has not had a rest and a chance to feed well her unborn calf. In addition to being well born the calf that is worth while to raise will have good lines, indicating the characteristic features of feed capacity, dairy temperament, and constitution, which in full developed form and combined with good developed milk organs are the essential features of a successful dairy cow.

Dairymen not having calves of desirable breeding and type to raise will do well to consider buying young calves from cows of outstanding merit and by good bulls, which are likely to prove much more satisfactory and profitable than raising calves of undesirable quality. Dairymen in districts adjacent to large condensing factories and to large cities have a surplus of good dairy calves, many of which may well be purchased and raised on farms in outlying districts.

METHODS OF RAISING CALVES

Give Calf Colostrum or "First Milk." Nature designed the colostrum or "first milk" of the mother of the new born calf to give the calf a proper start in life. It is well to leave the calf with its mother for the first two to four days, after which the dairy calf is best raised by careful hand feeding.

The method employed to raise a calf after it is weaned will depend upon the value of the calf and the feeds available. There is no better feed for a calf during its delicate age of the first four weeks than a limited amount of whole milk preferably from its dam. Two to five pounds of its mother's milk three times a day will encourage greatest growth on the part of a young calf.

A precaution to observe in feeding a young calf under any conditions is not to over-feed it, especially on very rich milk. One should furthermore be careful to have pails perfectly clean from which calves drink, and the temperature of the milk as near as possible to that of freshly drawn milk, or about 95 to 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Under any conditions or circumstances 300 to 400 pounds of whole milk may be regarded necessary and a good investment in raising any calf for dairy purposes.

Skimmilk Fed Calves. Most excellent growth will be secured in raising dairy heifer calves by the use of skimmilk after the calf is three weeks old. Up to this age the calf should receive approximately 1 pound of whole milk daily to each 10 pounds of live weight. At 21 days of age gradually substitute skimmilk for the whole milk over a period of 7 to 10 days. Gradually increase the amount of skimmilk to a maximum amount of 14 to 18 pounds, depending upon age, size and vigor of calf. With an abundance of skimmilk it may be fed profitably until the calf is a year or more old. Greatest returns on skimmilk will be secured by feeding not to exceed 20 pounds a day.

Feeds Supplementary to Milk. At ten days to two weeks old the calf will begin to eat small amounts of choice hay. A good quality of clover, alfalfa, or June grass hay will be most suitable. Keep mangers supplied with fresh hay to avoid bad results from hay which may become stale or moldy.

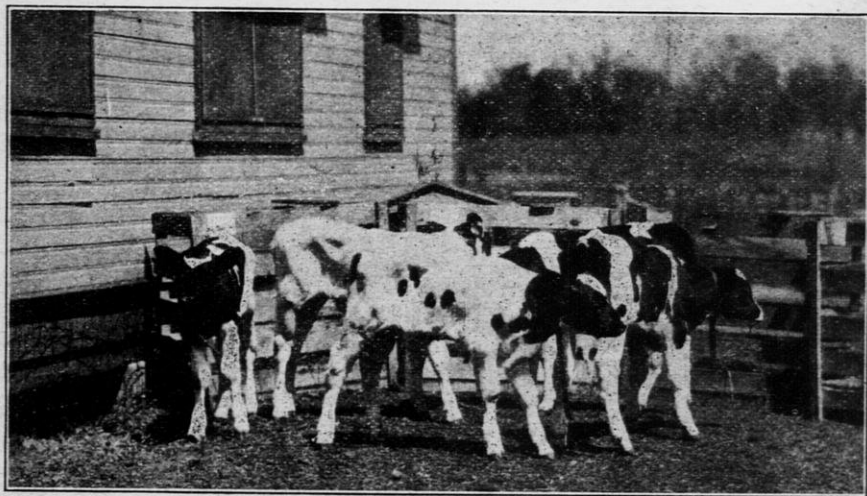
A concentrate mixture consisting of 3 parts by weight of ground oats, 4 of ground corn, 2 of wheat bran, and 1 of linseed meal has proved excellent for calves receiving skimmilk. Another mixture which has proved satisfactory consists of 50 parts whole oats, 30 parts wheat bran, 10 parts corn meal, and 10 parts linseed meal.

Rule for Feeding Concentrate Mixture. Suitable concentrate mixtures may be fed in such quantities as calves will eat without waste up to five pounds a head daily for older calves. It is well to encourage the calf to commence eating the concentrate mixture after it is two weeks old, beginning with a very small amount, which will be gradually increased as the calf develops. The aim should be to keep the calf thrifty and always keen for its feed.

After calves are six months old, less grain will be wasted if it is ground. During the first year it will pay to feed calves regularly in the barn. They may be turned out for exercise in shady paddocks.

General Care. Pure, fresh water and salt should be supplied to calves daily. Free access to water and salt will be the best means of regulating the supply.

Calves should be kept clean and comfortable. Having board overlays to protect calves from cold cement floors, taking precautions to avoid cold drafts of air, and having calf pens located to receive the warm sunlight during winter and enough of the stable heat to prevent damp, frosty conditions will add greatly to one's success in raising calves. In summer calves will be most comfortable in darkened stables which provide protection from flies and the hot sun. Good dairymen watch calves carefully for any indications of lice, ringworm, and any slight ailments which would tend to retard the growth or cause serious difficulty.



GRADE HOLSTEIN HEIFER CALVES.

A fine promise for the future herd which will be fulfilled to the extent that the calves are well raised.

KEEP CALVES GROWING THE SECOND YEAR

Maximum growth and development are secured only by giving due attention to feed and care throughout the second year as well as the first year of a heifer's lifetime. Corn silage, good legume hay, and a grain mixture consisting of ground corn, ground oats, wheat bran, and linseed meal provide good growing rations for heifers over six months during the winter period. Enough grain should be supplied to keep the heifers in fair condition of flesh, in which condition of flesh they may be expected to make a fair rate of gain.

It is a mistake to allow heifers to run down in flesh and to cease making a good rate of growth by neglecting them while on pasture. Pastures should provide an abundance of feed; otherwise concentrates and hay are necessary and should be supplied. Heifers with their first calf never have milk fever, and one will profit in milk production by having heifers in good condition of flesh at time of first calving.

Heifers which are well grown and bred at from sixteen to twenty months of age frequently out-produce older cows of the herd in their first lactation period.

RAISING CALVES WITHOUT SKIMMILK

Feeding trials conducted at the Wisconsin Experiment Station, with calves purchased at ten to fourteen days of age and representing Holstein and Guernsey breeds, received rations and made gains to show the results that might be secured on skimmilk, whole milk only, and whey, under general care which has already been suggested.

Calves which were raised on a limited supply of whole milk and which received no skim milk, made comparatively low gains but were thrifty and indicated that in market milk and condensery districts it is possible to raise calves with only a limited amount of whole milk, which in any instance did not exceed 400 pounds for each calf. It is suggested that under this method of raising calves, Holstein calves after being with their dams for three days be fed whole milk, increasing the amount gradually to 9 pounds daily at the end of the first week and continuing at this rate until 6 weeks of age. At this age gradually reduce the allowance until at the end of the seventh week no milk is fed.

Guernsey calves, after being with the dam for three days, should be fed whole milk at the rate of about 6 pounds daily for two weeks, after which the amount may be increased to 7 pounds daily and continued for 5 weeks. At 7 weeks gradually reduce the allowance of milk until at the end of 9 weeks no milk is fed.

The average feed cost to six months of age for calves raised on a limited supply of whole milk was slightly less than the feed cost of those which received a liberal supply of skimmilk.

WHEY MAY BE USED

By exercising care in changing from whole milk at the age of three weeks to pasteurized skimmed whey, good calves were raised in the feeding trials previously mentioned. Ten to fourteen days were taken to get the calves entirely changed from whole milk to whey. The amount of whey was gradually increased to 14 pounds a day. This amount was continued during the balance of the trial.

Whey from the general whey vat at a cheese factory is unfit to feed calves. Whey secured in clean cans from the cheese vat should only be fed after the calf has been well started on whole milk.

TREATMENT OF CALF TROUBLES

Scours. As soon as symptoms appear give the calf 2 to 4 tablespoonfuls of castor oil mixed with one-half pint of warm fresh milk. After four to six hours give a heaping teaspoonful of a mixture of one part Salol and two parts each of Subnitrate of Bismuth and Bicarbonate of Soda. This mixture may be given in one-half pint of milk or the powder placed on the calf's tongue and washed down with a small amount of milk. The dose may be repeated at intervals of four to six hours until scouring ceases. In mild cases castor oil is unnecessary.

Lice. To prevent lice treat infested stock or keep it off the premises. Disinfect and whitewash the walls of the stable. To kill lice, scrub the entire body with a commercial coal tar dip prepared according to the manufacturer's directions. Repeat the treatment in ten days to kill young lice hatched from the nits not destroyed by the first application.

Ringworm. To prevent the disease, clean, disinfect, whitewash and properly light and ventilate the stable. Treat affected spots on animals by saturating and scrubbing with soap and hot water until crusts and scales are removed, then paint twice daily with tincture of iodine as long as necessary.

DEHORN CALVES

Calves are most easily dehorned by the use of caustic potash as soon as the horns can be felt, which is usually at the age of three to ten days. Remove the hair about the horn, slightly moisten with potash and rub the skin until white but not until blood comes to cause unnecessary soreness. One treatment is usually sufficient. Protect the hands by holding the caustic in heavy paper. Do not allow moisture from caustic or use of caustic to make unnecessary soreness about the calf's head.

During May and June the Agricultural Committee of the Wisconsin Bankers' Association has had opportunity to present its agricultural program to twelve County Bankers' Associations. At most of these meetings the County Agricultural Agent was present and outlined to the bankers his program of work for the year. In each instance the County Bankers' Association has appointed a bankers' agricultural committee to cooperate with the County Agent in carrying out the projects he has adopted. This is just another instance of where Wisconsin bankers have a state wide plan for working with the farmers in an endeavor to improve agricultural conditions. The counties reached so far on this particular plan are: Clark, Eau Claire, Marathon, Vernon, Pierce, Green Lake, Langlade, Outagamie, Marinette, Ozaukee and Waukesha.