



Don't Let the Winter Cold Chill Your Calves' Progress

WINTER >>>> TIPS



Provide extra nutrients to the calf according to the energy demand:

Colder Temps = More energy needed



Provide extra nutrients by:

- Providing extra milk at each feeding
- Adding a fat supplement to the milk
- Feeding an additional feeding each day



Mix milk replacer according to tag directions, usually at 110-120°F.

With winter just around the corner, it's time to get prepared. Winter cold stress on dairy calves can have several significant impacts on dairy farm profitability. Cold stress occurs when the environmental temperature falls below the calf's lower critical temperature, and they are unable to maintain their normal body temperature without expending extra energy. Newborn calves can become cold-stressed even at fairly mild temperatures (<60 °F). This can affect dairy farm profitability through reduced growth rates and health challenges of calves.

As temperatures get colder, energy needs of the calves continue to increase. The amount of nutrients supplied to a calf needs to be increased to account for the additional energy needs. A 20% loss in daily growth rate due to the additional energy demands needed to keep calves warm could result in calves being 15-20 lbs lighter at weaning. This slower start will increase the overall costs of raising heifers and could lead to heifers entering the milking herd later than desired.

Additional energy can be provided by adjusting feeding strategies to meet the increased energy demands. Proactive management can help minimize the negative effects of cold stress and contribute to a more profitable operation.

Feeding strategies that help provide calves additional nutrients to keep them growing during colder temperatures include feeding fat supplements,

WINTER >>>> TIPS continued



Watch solids level of the milk replacer. Since ADM NurseTrate milk replacers are already concentrated, don't increase the concentration ratio to water. Keep solids less than 15%.



Feed warm milk replacer (100-105°F) to all calves (first and last ones fed). Use a thermometer to check the temperature, not your hand.



Provide warm water (100-105°F) so the calf's energy can be used for growth instead of warming up the intake liquids to body temperature.

What can
we help you
solve today?

increasing the amount of milk replacer the calves get at each feeding, or adding an additional feeding each day. Milk replacers with higher fat content are often used during winter to increase the calf's energy intake.

NurseTrate milk replacers are excellent milk replacers made up of high quality ingredients that are easily digested by the calves to provide them with the nutrition they need during cold winter temperatures. NurseTrate milk replacers contain SI Inside, a combination of specialty additives designed to keep calves healthy and growing even during periods of stress, like those that are brought on by cold temperatures and weather swings common during the winter months. Research¹ has shown calves fed milk replacer containing a component in SI Inside responded with better growth response advantage over controls, supporting better efficiency. NurseTrate milk replacers are available in a variety of fat and protein levels to meet the specific goals of individual farms.

Be sure to provide access to fresh water even while feeding milk replacer. Hydration is a crucial factor for maintaining body temperature, and is directly related to feed intake. Even during freezing temperatures, ensure that calves have access to water at least twice a day. Feeding calves warm water can be advantageous as calves will often drink it more readily, they do not have to spend extra energy warming it up and it will not freeze as quickly as cold water.

Early intervention and proactive management can help minimize the negative effects of cold stress. Determine if there are changes to your feeding program, such as providing additional energy sources or changing to a different milk source, that will help maintain the health and performance of your calves during the winter months. Focusing on these strategies can help contribute to a more profitable dairy farm operation. Contact our ADM Dairy Solutions team for help developing individualized nutrition solutions and programs for your operation.



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