

CALVING EASE

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HEAD TO TOE

Dress for Successful Calf Raising

Whether we look like the Michelin Tire Man or make a fashion statement our calves never giggle or guffaw at how we look. So, we dress to be warm and comfortable on *cold, cold, cold* days. We did an informal survey at our January meeting. The answers proved that "layering" was the most common method used to ward off winter chills. Here's what you say is the most popular winter wear for Western New York's snowbelt refrigerated weather (use of trade-names doesn't constitute endorsement by the editors).

Head

Knit ski cap, full-face ski mask, wrap-around ear muffs, hooded scarf, "trooper" hat (visored with fold-down neck and ear flaps), insulated Carhartt hood.

On Top

T-shirts (silk or cotton), turtlenecks, thermal undershirts, 14 oz. flannel shirts, Carhartts, double-thick hooded sweatshirts, insulated vests and jackets.

On the Bottom

Thermal long-johns, Carhartt insulated pants and bibs (two different weights of insulation - light and very heavy), flannel-lined jeans and Dickies.

Toes

Moisture-wicking socks, wool or silk socks, thermal socks, Thinsulate lined shoes and boots, sneakers tied loosely inside rubber boots, felt insoles and felt-lined boots.

Additional Warm Thoughts Shared by Calving Ease Readers

Thinsulate glove liners (about \$2 a pair) - These are thin enough to wear under rubber gloves, chore gloves and mittens. They leave you with needed finger dexterity.

Snowmobile gloves - These have thumb and index finger with remainder like a mitten.

Latex rubber survival gloves - These keep moisture out.

Activated charcoal hand and foot warmers - These last about 20 hours. One reader buys them in 6 packs at BJ's for best price. Run about \$2.

Ice-walkers - These strap on boots for those ice coated days for hutch feeders. Greenhouse feeders - eat your hearts out for those rugged outdoor experiences you are missing.

Peet Foot Dryer - These dry and warm boots and shoes overnight. They may seem costly (\$31 at Batavia Sporting Goods store) but dividing cost by number of days of use gets you about \$.30 per day of use in just one winter.

Sweatpants - An alternative to long johns. They are warm and hold up well after repeated washings. They double as run-to-the-store-before-work clothes when outerwear Carhartts have a day's worth of you-know-what clinging to them.

Snowboggan sled - These run about \$10. They work great for getting a calf that won't stand over bedded backs, snow and mucky free-stall floors (oops, had the calving date wrong on that one). One reader advises feeding calf first; then she is more likely to stay put on her snowboggan ride.

Warm hands - Put a gallon jug of hot water in with the calf-feeding equipment. Put cold hands on warm jug - ooooooh, that feels good.

Dry mittens and gloves - Do you have a heater or stove? Using discarded baskets from a freezer or refrigerator (plastic-coated wire type), make a drier above or in front of heater. This dries gloves without melting or burning them.

Drain-back Hydrants - You know, the ones that are not supposed to freeze but do anyway? Stack old tires over the stand pipe and spigot. Cover with a five-gallon pail. A short length of hose run from the faucet end to the outer edge of tires allows easy attachment of longer hose. Side benefit - tires make stand pipe very visible during snow removal.

Fences around hutches - If kept over the roof of empty hutches in winter the fences don't freeze down. Also, up out of the way like that they make snow removal easier.

Heating milk - If in bottles, one reader puts four bottles in a five-gallon pail, fills with hot water and covers with lid. If in larger container (pails, barrels), one or two-gallon plastic jugs filled with hot water and tight-fitting cap can be dropped into milk. These can be left there until finished feeding milk for maximum heating.

Calf Feeder's Tip

Need to warm 10 or 15 gallons of milk? Your local hardware store may stock coils of soft copper tubing. We use 30 feet in the coil it came in from the store with a hose fitting on each end. With the ends bent up to extend above 15 gallons of milk in a 20 gallon garbage pail, we attach a hot-water hose to one end and a hose run into an empty garbage pail to the

other end. On goes the hot water. Even a small stream will warm a lot of milk in 15-20 minutes. Waste warm water is fed to just-weaned calves.

If you know of someone that doesn't currently receive **Calving Ease** but would like to, tell them to **WRITE** to Calving Ease, 11047 River Road, Pavilion, NY 14525 or to **CALL** either 585-591-2660 (Attica Vet Assoc. office) or 585-343-8128 (Offhaus Farms Office) or **FAX** (585-591-2898) or **e-mail** sleadley@frontiernet.net or pams91@2ki.net . A limited number of back issues may be accessed on the Internet at www.calfnotes.com and clicking on the link, Calving Ease.