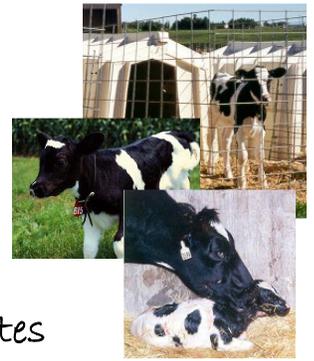


Calving Ease

November 2010

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How Good is My Calf Rearing Program?

Have you heard of the “Gold Standards” for heifer raising? “The standards outline production and performance expectations in six categories for Holstein calves from birth to six months of age and for Holstein heifers from 6 months to freshening. Additional goals for other dairy breeds will be added in the future.”

“The standards were developed by a team of producers, contract growers, consultants and industry representatives who surveyed producers, DCHA members and university specialists across the United States. Support for this project was generously provided by Pfizer Animal Health”

Where to find them?

Go to <http://www.calfandheifer.org/?page=GoldStandards> to find “Gold Standards” that apply to heifers birth through 6 months of age and “Gold Standards II” for older heifers up to calving.

What are the standards for younger heifers?

Target mortality rates are:

1. 24 hours to 60 days of age: <5%
2. 61-120 days of age: <2%
3. 121-180 days of age: <1%

Target morbidity rates:

Scours:

1. 24 hours to 60 days of age: <25%
2. 61-120 days of age: <2%
3. 121-180 days of age: <1%

Pneumonia:

1. 24 to 60 days of age: <10%
2. 61-120 days of age: 15%
3. 121-180 days of age: <2%

Target growth rates are:

1. 24 hours to 60 days of age: double birth rate
2. 61-120 days of age: 2.2 pounds average daily gain
3. 121-180 days of age: 2.0 pounds average daily gain

Additional sections describe standards for (1) Colostrum management, (2) Nutrition, and (3) Housing.

What are the standards for older heifers?

Target mortality rates:

1. 6 to 12 months of age: <1%
2. 12 months to freshening: <0.5%

Target morbidity rates:

Pneumonia:

1. 6 to 12 months of age: <3%
2. 12 months to freshening: <1%

All other causes:

1. 6 to 12 months of age: <4%
2. 12 months to freshening: <2%

Target growth rates and nutrition:

6 months to freshening: 1.7 to 2.0 pounds average daily gain

Housing, vaccination and parasite control and breeding complete the list of standards.

Are these the best standards for my operation?

At the end of 2010 one worthwhile task would be to summarize performance on your calf and heifer operation. Use the targets criteria from the standards – like mortality, morbidity, growth, colostrum management, calf nutrition, calf housing, heifer housing, vaccination and parasite control and breeding. Where do you stand?

Then, you have a choice of comparing yourself to (1) where you were last year on these same targets, or (2) the “Gold Standards”. Usually there are at least two or three areas that represent opportunities to make our heifer raising enterprise more profitable. Should those become our 2011 goals?

Good calf and heifer raising for 2011!

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** 585-591-2660 (Attica Vet Assoc. office) or **FAX** (585-591-2898) or **e-mail** calvingease@rochester.rr.com. A limited number of back issues may be accessed on the Internet at either www.atticacows.com or www.calfnotes.com and clicking on the link, Calving Ease.

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