

# Caring for **new calves**

**Good calf performance begins with proper care of the newborn calf. A proper review of any newborn calf programme must start with the dry cow programme, concentrate on colostrum management and end with the calf starting on its regular liquid diet that it will be on for the next several weeks.**

Firstly, make sure the newborn calf has a good feed of colostrum. Then spray the newborn's navel with iodine. This is very important, as bacteria are everywhere in the environment. The calf's navel (umbilicus) is warm and damp, and bacteria thrive in these conditions. It can speedily travel up the navel and get into the calf's blood. This can cause many serious health problems, such as navel ill, joint ill, liver abscess, bladder infections and more, and can even lead to death.



**Iodine navel spray or dip**

When spraying the navel, make sure it is well covered with iodine. Iodine is a great first-aid treatment for cuts and scratches on animals. If it is sprayed on (especially if the wound is sore) it treats the wound quickly. Make sure it is sprayed on at a safe distance.

## **Dry cow programme**

The dry cow is often overlooked as a major element of any newborn calf programme, yet it can have a major impact on calf performance. The following are key areas to review:

### **1. Vaccination programme**

The dry cow period is a great time to vaccinate. Immune stimulation from the vaccine not only benefits the cow, but will also spike the immune levels in the colostrum, which will benefit the calf. The herd vaccination programme (cows and calves) should be written down and reviewed with the local veterinarian at least annually.

### **2. Nutrition**

Proper levels of protein, energy and trace minerals are required to assure that the newborn calf is given a good foundation of nutrients for proper health and growth after birth. Maintaining proper dry cow body condition is also important.



## Teaching a newborn to suckle

The oesophageal feeder, or tube feed, may be the quickest way to get colostrum into a weak newborn. Oesophageal/tube feeding does not trigger the oesophageal groove reflex, which could result in fluid ending in the rumen. It is supposed to land in the abomasum.

Sucking is a reflex in the newborn. It is absolutely essential to encourage sucking while the animal is very young. Try by getting the animal to suck your fingers. Have the bottle of warmed milk ready and at hand. Spend some time with the calf, give its body a rub down and make it feel comfortable. With one hand, rub around the hairless area of its anus to mimic what its mother would do as she washes its 'bottom'.

Hold the bottle so that the teat is just touching near its mouth. Hopefully the newborn's rooting reflex will kick in and its mouth will search for the teat. Once the teat is in its mouth, it will start to suckle. Calves often copy their pen mates (if you are feeding calves in a group). A sick calf (such as a dehydrated calf) will not suckle. In this case, give electrolytes using an oesophageal feeder.

## Newborn calf care

Ensure good calf performance by taking good care of the cow during pregnancy.

### For pregnant cows:

- Follow a good dry cow programme; treat the udder and teats to prevent infection.
- Feed nutritious food.
- Vaccinate.

### For the newborn calf:

- Feed enough colostrum (cow's first milk).
- Bottle fed milk should be warm (body temperature).
- Treat the navel with iodine wound spray.

## Versorging van 'n nuwe kalf

Verseker 'n gesonde kalf deur goed na haar ma te kyk terwyl sy dragtig is.

### Dragtige koei:

- Volg 'n droëkoeiprogram; behandel haar uier en spene om infeksie te voorkom.
- Gebruik voedsame voer.
- Inenting.

### Pasgebore kalf:

- Voer genoeg kolostrum (die koei se eerste melk).
- Bottelmelk moet loutarm wees (liggaamstemperatuur).
- Behandel die naeltjie met 'n jodiumsproei.

## Ukunakekela Inkonyane esandakuzalwa

Qinisekisa ukusebenza ngemfanelo kwenkonyane ngokusebenza ngemfanelo ngokunakekela unina wayo ngesikhathi ekhulelwe.

### Inkomo ekhulelwe:

- Landela uhlelo olomile enkomeni; yelapha imibele nezingono ukuvimbela ukutheleleka.
- Zifunze ukudla okunomsoco.
- Ukugonywa.

### Inkonyana esandakuzalwa:

- Zinikeze i-colostrum eyanele (ubisi lwenkomo lokuqala).
- Ubisi oluphuzwa ngebhodlela kumele lube lufudumele (lube esimweni sokushisa esijwayelekile).
- Yelapha inkaba ngokokuthela isilonda okuyi-iodine.



Rub around the anus

## Unakekelo lwethole elisanda kuzalwa

Qinisekisa ukusebenza ngokukuko kwethole ngokunakekela unina walo ngexesha amithiyo.

### **Imazi yenkomo emithiyo:**

- Landela inkqubo yokomiswa kwemazi yenkomo; nyanga ibele nemibele ukunqanda usuleleko.
- Fida ngokutya okuya egazini.
- Gonya.

### **Ithole elisanda kuzalwa:**

- Lifide ngomthubi owaneleyo (ubisi lokuqala lwenkomo).
- Ubisi lokuncancisa ngebhotile kufuneka lifudumale (ngokweqondo lobushushu bomzimba).
- Nyanga inkaba ngesitshizi sezilonda seayodini.



## **Tlhokomelo ya namane e sa tswa tswalwa**

Etsa bonnete ba ho ba le namane e phetseng hantle ka ho hlokomela Mme wa yona nakong eo e jereng namane.

### **Kgomo e immeng:**

- Latela lenaneo nakong eo kgomo e kgaoditseng ho ntsha lebese; hlokomela thele le dihloko tsa kgomo ho thibela tshwaetso.
- Fepa kgomo ka dijo tse nang le dimatlafatsi.
- Enta.

### **Namane e sa tswa tswalwa:**

- E nwese kgatsele (lebese la pele la kgomo).
- Lebese le tshetsweng botlolong le futhumatswe (themperetjhara ya mmele).
- Hlwekisa mokgubu ka seprei sa maqeba se nang le moriana wa iodine. **UMI**

Use an oesophageal feeder to give electrolytes to a sick calf.