

AVA Newsletter



December 2015

BioPRYN Holiday Schedule:

Christmas – All samples must arrive by Tues 12/22, No Thurs or Fri tests will be run

New Years – all samples must arrive by Tues 12/29



"Who let Bessie substitute for Rudolf? I wasted half the night jumping over the moon!"

For Sale:

Dry sawdust bedding by the 10 wheeler load. Call Dan George at 716-430-3747

Big square bales 2nd cut silage bales. Call Jason Kehl at 585-535-7314

Holiday Schedule:

Christmas Eve/New Years Eve – Closed at noon

Christmas Day/New Years Day – Closed for routine services

We are available for emergencies 24/7/365 at 585-591-2660.

Wishing you a happy and festive holiday season!

Attica Veterinary Associates
116 Prospect Street
Attica, NY 14011
585-591-2660

Heifers Benefit from Gradual Ration Changes

Pre-weaned heifers thrive on consistency. They benefit from being fed the same ration at the same time at the same temperature by the same caretaker as often as possible. A checklist of calf care consistency can be found at www.atticacows.com, click on Calf Facts and choose “Consistency: Calf Care Checklist.”

When changes are necessary, it is best to make them gradually. For example, suppose your milk replacer feeding program calls for increasing the amount of milk replacer fed to four week old calves from two to four quarts. We usually have fewer scours problems when this increase is made in gradual steps of one-half quart at a time rather than all two quarts at once.

Gradual weaning is associated with fewer respiratory problems, too. Many calf raisers follow a two-step weaning program. Step one is to discontinue one of the two daily feedings of milk replacer as long as calves have access to free choice water. Once the calves are eating three to four quarts of calf starter grain, the second step is to eliminate all milk replacer. The gradual step down on milk replacer allows the calf to switch her ration from liquid to solid feed over a seven to ten days.

During the first five days in this milk step-down program, calves often increase calf starter grain intake by four to five times the amount they were eating before weaning started. Using grain intake as a “signal” to completely drop milk feeding yields a minimally stressful transition.

Discontinuation of milk is not the only source of stress during weaning. Often, calves are moved to transition pens, causing significant stress. We recommend keeping them on their ration of free choice grain and water for five to seven days after the move. That ration does not include any forage (either hay, haylage or TMR).

When adding hay to the ration for these transition heifers, remember again that gradual changes work better than sudden ones. Begin by feeding the amount of forage heifers can eat in one hour. This limited forage feeding encourages the multiplication of the forage digesting microbial population in the rumen. These microbes multiply slowly so the slow introduction is why we have to give these transition heifers time to reach a new equilibrium with their rumen “bugs.”

When the introduction of forages is rushed, (that is, feeding forages free choice immediately after weaning), the transition heifers tend to gorge on the forages. They replace grain consumption with hay. Their rumens are not prepared with forage digesting microbes yet, resulting in full bellies that can’t utilize all of the nutrients. Additionally, due to less grain consumption, calves may not be receiving sufficient coccidiostat, increasing their risk for clinical coccidiosis.

Gradual changes cause less stress and lead to healthier calves that continue gaining weight through big changes.

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