

Topic of the Month

Winter is back

Winter is a tough time for dairy calves. Their small frame size allows for more heat loss per unit of bodyweight than a mature cow. As a result, they will burn a lot of calories just to maintain body temperature. But there are some things that can be done to prevent weight loss and immune system depression from the cold.

First, put a blanket on them. Calf blankets are a good way to hold some additional heat in. We carry them in sizes appropriate for both Jersey and Holstein calves. Call ahead to order.

Second, bed them deep with straw. Straw is a pretty good insulator and if it's deep enough, the calf will nest in it providing even more insulation.

Third, pay attention to colostrum management. Colostrum deprived calves are much more susceptible to dying from scours during the winter than summer.

Fourth, feed them more milk. This is essential to prevent weight loss and deadly scours. Calves will lose weight on 4 quarts of 20/20 milk replacer when the mercury dips below freezing. If you think milk is expensive, it's even more expensive when you feed it without realizing any weight gain. At minimum, feed an additional 2 quarts a day. A better option is to feed 3 quarts per feeding and add an additional feeding of a high quality, high protein milk replacer. You can use the time normally spent treating scouring calves to feed the extra feeding.

Commodity Futures

Source: CME

Corn(Mar) as of Dec 31	\$3.97
Soybeans(Jan) as of Dec 31	\$10.19
Soybean meal(Jan) as of Dec 31	\$364.60
Cheese (Dec) as of Dec 31	\$1.74
Class III(Dec) as of Dec 31	\$17.82
Class III(Jan) as of Dec 31	\$15.91
Class III(Feb) as of Dec 31	\$15.69

Practice News

- For clients who are not in the immediate location of the clinic, drugs and medications can be drop shipped to your farms. If you call in before 10 AM your order will be placed with one of our vendors, and usually the drugs will be received the next day. For more details, talk to Lori at the office.

In The News

2014 dairy cow culling reduced

from Dairyherd.com

Despite record-high beef prices, the number of U.S. dairy cows culled for slaughter under federal inspection fell 300,000 behind the same period a year ago, and is on pace to be the lowest annual total since 2008, based on estimates contained in USDA's monthly Livestock Slaughter report.

U.S. dairy cows culled for slaughter in November 2014 were estimated at 217,900 head, 33,900 less than October 2014, and down 31,200 from November 2013.

November 2013 contained 21 weekdays (including 2 holidays) and 5 Saturdays. November 2014 contained 20 weekdays (including 2 holidays) and 5 Saturdays.

January-November 2014 slaughter was estimated at 2.559 million head, down about 309,000 from the same period in 2013.

For the year to date, 29% of culled cows came from USDA Zone 5 (IL, IN, MI, MN, OH & WI); 26% came from USDA Zone 9 (AZ, CA, HI & NV).

While cow numbers are down, USDA estimated averaged dressed weight was up slightly, to 627 lbs., compared to 620 lbs. a year ago.

Upcoming Events

- Pennsylvania Farm Show January 9-17, 2015, Harrisburg, PA
- The 2015 Dairy Summit will be held on Feb. 4 - 5 at the Lancaster Marriott in Penn Square. For more information:
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