



# Cow-Calf Management Guide

## II. Calving Season—Cows

**Management Objectives**—(1) Manage cows to rebreed as scheduled, and (2) optimum livability of calves.

**Nutrition management**—Handling the feed resources to meet the requirements of the animals concerned.

**Ration balancing**—Putting the feeds in the correct ratio to meet the needs of the animals.

**Nutrient requirements**—A food constituent or group of food constituents of the same general chemical composition that is required by the animal for a specific set of conditions.

**Moisture content**—That amount of the feed that is water and has no more nutritive value than water.

### Points to Remember

- The above-average milking cow will need about 30 pounds of hay per day. **CL300, 310, 330**
- Successful *nutrition management* requires analysis of feed resources. **CL301, 303, 305, 306, 309, 380, 381, 580, 619**
- Best feeding management is attained by separating cows that have calved from those that have not. **CL300**
- *Ration balancing* using the animal's nutrient requirements and the nutrient composition of the feed resource should be used to determine the appropriate ration. **CL310, 311, 325, 580, 581**
- Animals have specific *nutrient requirements*. **CL300, 310, 380, 381**
- *Moisture content* of feeds must be known to assure accurate ration formulation, particularly silages. **CL309, 310, 320, 323, 324**
- If the livestock producer knows the nutrient composition of the feed resources, correct nutritional decisions can be made. **CL301, 305, 314, 380, 381**

**Postcalving**—After calving.

**Chronic nature**—Long duration.

**Pelvic cavity**—The area between the hip bones; the birth canal.

- The mineral needs of a cow increase rapidly after she calves. **CL300, 315, 327, 628, 629**
- Extra nutrients are required 90 days *postcalving* to assure a cow that will produce maximum milk and rebreed efficiently. **CL325, 330, 580, 581**
- Injuries and diseases of beef cattle at calving include some common and acute conditions that generally respond rapidly to treatment with little effect on the subsequent breeding period. **CL660, 661, 691**
- Several conditions may occur during calving or soon after. Because of their *chronic nature* these diseases have a decided effect on the breeding history of the affected cows. **CL660**
- Calving losses in heifers are often high, and most of these deaths are a result of calving difficulties. **CL446, 447**
- The rancher must use good judgment in decisions as to which calving problems require professional help. **CL447**
- Traction on the calf in the early stages should be exerted upward in the direction of the tail head and not downward. Once the calf is in the *pelvic cavity*, traction should be straight backward and then downward; thus the calf passes through the birth canal in the form of an arch. **CL447, 601**
- Many calving difficulties could be eliminated by proper development of replacement heifers or breeding first-calf heifers to bulls that will sire calves with below-average birth weights. **CL413, 447, 442, 601**
- Even though calf weight is the single most important cause of calving difficulty, size of the pelvic opening of the cow is also related to calving difficulty. **CL446, 447**

## Good Management Practices

1. As cows calve they should be separated from cows that have not calved so both can be fed to their requirements. **CL300, 413**
2. Heifers calving for the first time should be separated from older cows so they can be watched more closely for calving problems. **CL300, 442, 447**
3. The chances of calving problems with heifers are five times greater than with mature cows. **CL447**

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| 4. Provide cows a salt-phosphorus mixture with trace minerals added. Any special minerals should be added.                      | <b>CL300, 312, 315, 327, 627, 628</b> |
| 5. The hospital pen should be easy to bring cattle into, dry, sheltered, and convenient to work in.                             | <b>CL450, 660, 791, 792</b>           |
| 6. Be sure the cow is allowing the calf to nurse. Signs: Wet or curled hair around the teat and a shiny appearance to the teat. | <b>CL450, 648</b>                     |

## Plan Ahead

Prepare for processing before breeding season.

- Review herd health program for cows and have vaccine and other products on hand. **CL600, 602, 605, 657, 659, 662, 678, 681, 683, 690, 691**
- Examine and treat eye problems that might worsen on the range. **CL212, 640, 678**
- Be prepared to sort out cows and calves that are unthrifty and hold them back from range. **CL330, 640, 661, 720**



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