



PENGUIN VETERINARY CENTRE

Some information on **CATTLE** & **poddy calves**. (**products in bold can be purchased here)

Feeding Adult Cows. Being ruminants they need roughage in their diet. Generally mixed pasture grasses, supplemented with pasture hay over-winter and in Spring (when fresh clovers can cause bloat). Ruminant pellets are OK but should be introduced slowly and with caution. Avoid high energy Dairy or Equine rations. CAUTION: Cows generally select safe foods. BUT they will eat toxic vegetation if it has already been lopped & is then offered to them. Take care, especially with rhododendrons, azaleas, rhubarb leaves & the stubble of harvested crops such as poppies or potatoes.

WORMS: Can be a serious problem for all cattle, but especially growing calves & recently calved heifers. They may suffer diarrhoea, ill-thrift, breathing problems &/or death.

- Drench calves at 3 & 8 weeks of age and then each 3-4 months life-long, but especially in Spring & Autumn &, when possible, whenever they enter new pasture.
- New-to-you cows should be drenched ASAP after arrival on your property.

Ivermectin-based drenches are recommended. We stock **Cydectin Pour-On** & CAN dispense it in small quantities if you have just a few cattle.

- We can develop a strategic drenching program to suit you, your cattle & their environs.
- We can assess your stock's worm problem by faecal flotation tests (bring in ½ cup fresh poo).

Other Parasites: **Lice**, bacterial dermatitis, coccidial scours etc. may need to be specifically treated, but they often reflect some other concurrent husbandry problem such as malnutrition, gut-worms, overstocking or inadequate hygiene.

VACCINATIONS: "**5in1**" protects cattle, sheep, alpaca & goats from Clostridial Disease [Pulpy Kidney, Tetanus, Black disease, Blackleg & Malignant Oedema] & can be purchased combined with selenium if needed. Vaccinate calves at 6 and 12 weeks, then each year. Vaccination of breeding cows will maximize the protection they can pass on to their calves in colostrum.

We can vaccinate your calf/cow for you, and will demonstrate the technique so that you are then able to do it yourself. We sell vaccine packs, and also individual doses.

On some properties vaccination against Leptospirosis &/or Pestivirus may also be advised.

LIFESPAN: You can expect your cow to live 8-14 years.

BREEDING: Puberty can be as early as 4 - 5 months, but heifers should not be bred until their 2nd year. Cycles occur each 21 days mainly in Spring and Autumn. They are in oestrus (receptive) 12-24 hours. Gestation/ Pregnancy lasts 9 months. Most cows have one calf, although twins & triplets can occur.

MARKING: of horns: Please phone us for advice
of young males: ring them within 4 weeks; if older, they may need surgical castration.

To Raise an ORPHAN CALF.

HOUSING. Should be warm, dry, clean and safe. As from a few days of age they should be let out daily to exercise and to start nibbling pasture.

DIET. **Cow** colostrum is needed within 48 hours of birth to provide them with early immunity against disease (After 48 hours colostrum will be nutritious, but cannot provide immune-protection).

***Suitable replacement milks include:**

1. Pasteurised Homogenised Full-Cream cow's milk Not skim milk, it does not provide enough sustenance)
2. Calf/Lamb milk replacer (from Stock & Station Agents)
3. **Formula One** or similar milk replacements available here.

First feed: Offer pre-boiled water, preferably strengthened with glucose & electrolytes (e.g. **Vytrate**)

Second feed: (2-3 hours later) 2 parts as for first feed + 1 part milk*

Third feed (perhaps 5-6 hours later) 1 part as for first feed + 2 parts milk*

Then: Feed 2-3 times daily, using the full strength milk formula*

NOTE: DON'T MAKE SUDDEN CHANGES IN A CALF'S DIET. If you need to change the type of milk used, mix the new and old milks together and dilute the mix back to 2/3 strength with pre-boiled water for a few days. If this is not possible, return to "First Feedings" above and gradually accustom the calf to its new diet.

How much to feed? Usually, 2 litres twice daily. Larger calves may drink more, smaller ones less. Do not over-feed or force feed. (If they do not drink enough, they probably need top-up feeds during the day)

Starting Solids Calves will start to nibble grass or calf-pellets at a few days of age. From 6-8 weeks, they can go onto once-daily milk feeds supplemented by an evening meal of milk-replacement-pellets. From 12 weeks, they can be weaned onto good pasture, but they will do best if milk and/or pellets are offered for a further 3-4 months.

Worming & Vaccinations: See Previously

Calf Diarrhoea.

- Caused by:
1. Not enough colostrum within 24(-48) hours of birth.
 2. (Dis)stress: e.g. chilling, altered diet, loss of mother, exposure, going through sale-yards, transport, non-acceptance by foster mother etc.
 3. A sudden change of diet.
 4. An unsuitable diet: e.g. overfed, force-fed, non-homogenised milk etc.
 5. Bad feeding methods e.g. head down to drink from a bucket (they often then gulp in too much air, causing colic, discomfort & distress).
 6. Bad hygiene
 7. Contagious microbial enteritis, caught from other calves e.g. Salmonella, E.coli, Coccidiosis.
 8. For calves eating pasture ... worms!

Try to identify and remove the cause, then: PTO

A. For Calves still alert, active & drinking well:-**Keep them warm & dry.****Go off-milk for 24 hours.**

Instead, feed a mix of glucose and electrolytes e.g. **Vytrate**; offer 1 litre 4 times daily via a teat, & warmed to 30 – 35 degrees centigrade. Add an anti-diarrhoeal agent such as **Scourban (S4)** for 3-5 days.

Decide on the milk type you are to use (it must be suitable & **available** so you need not change it (see prev.)

On the 2nd day feed a mix of one part milk to one part glucose/electrolyte.

On the 3rd day, 2 parts milk to one part glucose/electrolyte.

Then resume full milk feeds. If scours return, weaken the mix and re-strengthen slowly.

Please do contact us if scours persist or worsen despite this approach.....

ALSO isolate this calf from healthy calves, and maintain hygiene carefully.

B. If your Calf is 'flat' (chilled, weak, won't suck, has collapsed):

1. Warm the calf: wrap it up, put it near a safe heater, add a hot water bottle etc. Weak calves have not the energy to keep themselves warm!
2. Slowly offer Glucose and Electrolyte mix (**Vytrate**) warmed to 35 degrees centigrade. Make sure the calf has time to swallow. Try to give 30ml per kg calf weight. (For a 35kg calf, about 1litre)
3. Repeat this each 2 hours until the calf has the strength to suck
4. Then continue as for the "alert" calf above.

If you are unsuccessful, bring the calf in and we can tube-feed him for you

We can demonstrate a "**Calf Feeder**" that will allow you to safely tube-feed weak calves yourself.

We can also rehydrate calves for you with fluids via a subcutaneous or intravenous drip.

For further advice, phone 6437 1331.

Products mentioned above are available from us.