

# Chester Co. Dairy Day featured calf care

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favor of the best of care for calves. He underscored the necessity for good care, as well as the timeliness of it.

The dairy specialist caused a few eyebrows to rise when he advocated the feeding of a high energy drink - "Gatorade," to be specific - to calves which are down with scours. The

reasoning behind this is that milk provides bacteria with the best possible medium for multiplying. Therefore, if the calf is infected with pathogens, one step towards making it rough for the bacteria is to take away the milk and replace it with something else which would still benefit the calf. "Gatorade" fits the bill very well, according to Ace. If buying this product in the supermarket is unpractical for some reason, Ace recommends mixing your own. The recipe for a high energy drink for calves is as follows:

Eight tablespoons dextrose, Karo syrup, or honey. (Any one of these three will do satisfactorily). Two teaspoons of salt, one teaspoon of baking soda. Place these ingredients in a one-gallon jug, add water and mix well. The mixture should be made fresh daily and fed at a rate of about one per cent of body weight per day. Feedings should be more than twice a day and continue for about a day and a half. According to Ace this formula will provide the calf with wholesome nutrition, while simultaneously more or less starve the pathogens.

Another important point the dairy specialist made was: "All too often our calf raising facilities are built for us - so it's comfortable for us to take care of the calves in." Vigorously opposed to maltreatment of calves, Ace urged dairymen to think more of the well-being of their future dairy cows.

Going over a number of management procedures one at a time, Ace talked briefly about milk replacers and informed the group that even a low quality milk replacer can do a good job with calves - not the best - but good. The feeding of milk replacers and the results a dairyman sees with them is directly tied to his management, Ace disclosed.

"Cold surroundings never hurt a healthy, well-fed, dry calf in the world," Ace continued. "Cold is devastating only to a sick animal," he added. In attempting to have a calf barn which is the right temperature, Ace cautioned the dairymen to not ever just warm the barn up without taking humidity levels and ventilation into consideration, because it could result in multiplying the problem.

One of the most beneficial things a farmer can do for his calf-raising program is to see to it that each new-born calf comes into the world in clean surroundings and with colostrum from his mother waiting for it. He noted that colostrum contains 10 times the amount of Vitamin A, three to four times the amount of antibodies, and at least twice the amount of protein, fat and other milk solids that regular milk has. Therefore, to take advantage of this milk, Ace recommends feeding it right away - before disease organisms have a head start to enter the calf's digestive tract. He noted that a calf, has no defense mechanisms heat regulatory system UNTIL colostrum is made available to it.

Rather than have the calf try to find its way to the "spigot" and take a chance of it not being found, Ace recommends that

the dairyman milk the cow himself and offer it to the calf as soon after birth as possible. What's more, he suggests that the colostrum from the FIRST milking be saved for the second and third feedings because subsequent milkings will not yield an equally nutritious product. He says the calf should drink about one pound of colostrum for its first meal.

While stressing the importance of cleanliness throughout his presentation, Ace admitted it would be impossible to sanitize every phase of a calf-raising program. Nevertheless, he advised farmers to strive for the cleanest conditions possible and added "I would like to see you use the same clean procedures for calves as what you produce milk with."

Organisms need three basic conditions to survive and multiply, which are 1. food, 2. water, and 3. warmth. Ace said that if any of these three are removed from the scene, "then you've got him (the organism) by the tail on a downhill pull."

The elimination of stress factors is of utmost importance, Ace stated. Without that initial colostrum the calf has nothing to produce body heat with nor defend itself against germs. Without the advantage of colostrum the calf is off to a bad start. Add to that dirty and drafty surroundings and the calf is in serious trouble.

With so many different housing plans available for calves, and many of them working satisfactorily, Ace spoke in general terms and touched mainly on the importance of humidity, draft, moisture, temperature and cleanliness. On the subject of humidity in particular, he said that the higher the humidity, the higher the calf losses are likely to be. Cleanliness is important for more than just the calf, Ace explained. A dirty maternity pen, for example, is a likely place for cows to pick up germs in their reproductive tract which later lead to breeding problems. He also noted that the bacteria which cause scours and breeding difficulties are often one and the same.

On the feeding of mastitic milk to calves, Ace frowned upon it for younger calves, but saw no reason to oppose the practice for older calves. He did not advise the feeding of treated milk, however, explaining that the antibiotics could kill beneficial bacteria within the calf's stomach. An explanatory note should be added here in that mastitic milk usable for older calves is the kind which is still normal in appearance.

The discolored stuff with chunks of white cheesy material floating in it is good for nothing. In making these remarks, Ace added a note of caution in that calves fed mastitic milk could spread the disease to other young heifers if they have an opportunity to suck their udders.

Sour colostrum received a favorable evaluation from Ace, and he also acknowledged it is being very well received by dairymen all across the state.

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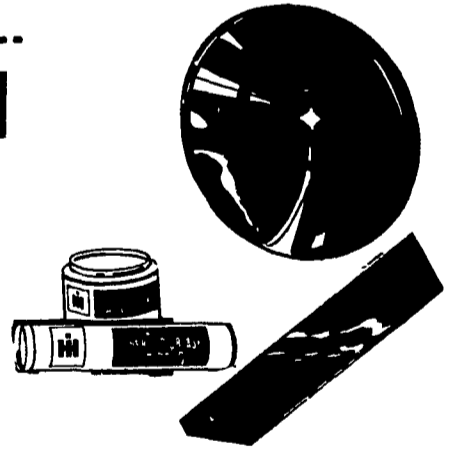
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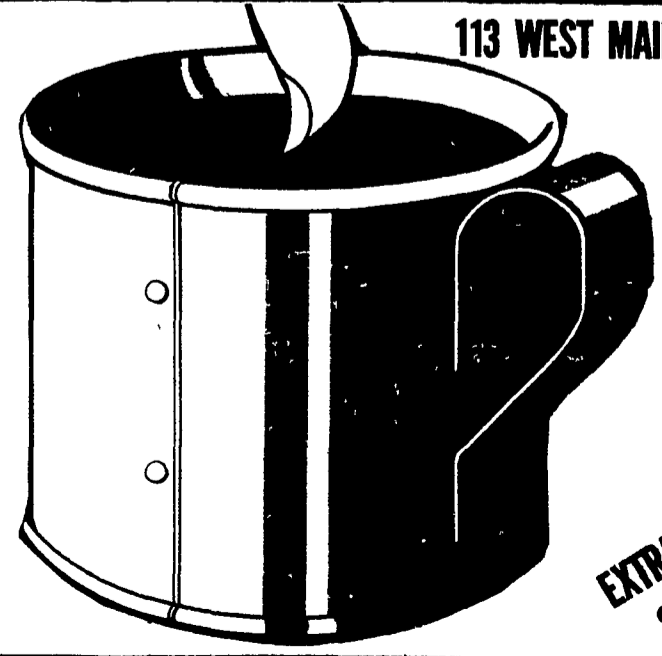


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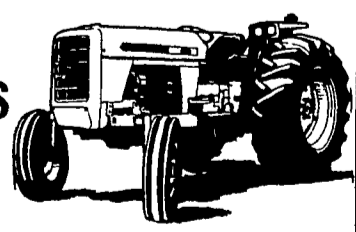
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