

Ask the VMD

Leon Riegel

Synthea Maas

Tim Trayer

Edgar Sheaffer

A reader asks:
What obstetrical equipment do you recommend that a beef or dairy farmer have on hand that would replace the standard baler twine? Please list the proper methods of use for a farmer when a vet cannot be present during a difficult delivery.

Dr. Sheaffer comments:
It is not so much the equipment that a farmer needs as the understanding of a normal delivery. Early recognition of dystocia (difficult birth) is essential to save a calf.

Early correction of a dystocia will prevent the mother from being

severely injured. A normal anterior dorsal presentation has both front feet side-by-side with the soles of the calf's feet facing downward toward the cow's hocks.

The calf's muzzle should be resting on the front legs in front of the corpus (knees). If the muzzle is behind the knees, there is a problem.

Forceful pulling of the feet will either cause the head to go back, or tear the cow, or both. A normal posterior presentation has the soles of the calf's feet facing upward toward the cow's tail. The calf's tail head should be just

beneath the cow's and parallel to it.

If the calf is rotated sideways or worse still, upside down, do not pull forcefully on the feet. Correct positioning of the calf is the most important part of a safe delivery. At times, the cow's vagina or cervix is not properly dilated. This generally can be corrected by using plenty of sterile lubricant or soap.

A well known bovine veterinarian has said, "hasten slowly at calving." I heartily agree. Sometimes we cause a lot of problems by trying to hurry the birth process.

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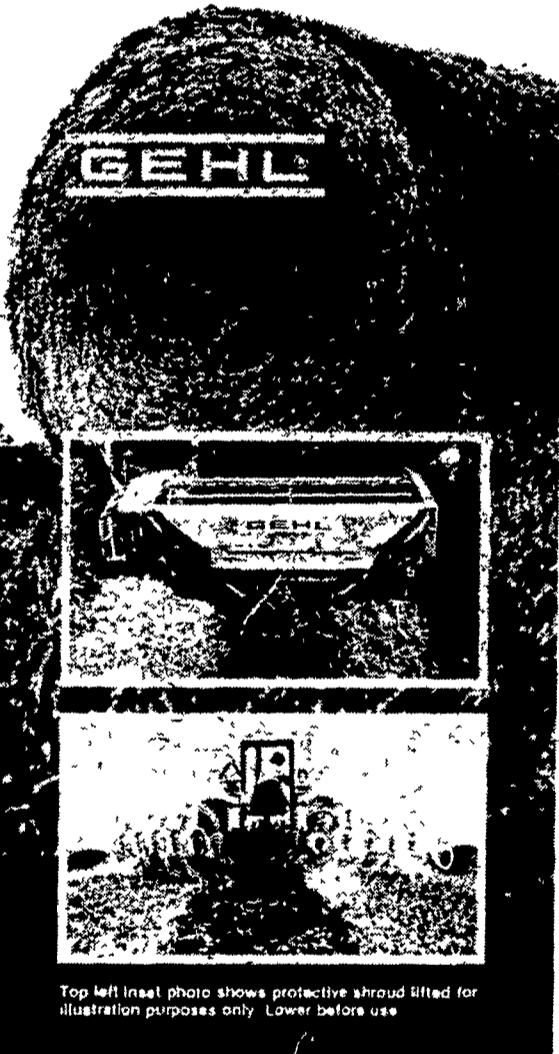
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Once the farmer can determine the normal from the abnormal, using obstetrical chains and handles are fine. Knowledge of the proper usage of a traction device, like a calf-puller, can also be helpful.

However, I do not believe that any equipment is absolutely essential to have on hand. Ninety-eight percent of calvings will proceed nicely using the standard clean baler twine.

Del. feeder pig show

NEWARK, Del.—A feeder pig show and sale is scheduled for Saturday, April 17 at Carroll's Sale Barn in Felton, Del. The show and sale are sponsored by the Delaware Pork Producers Association and the Delaware Cooperative Extension Service.

The show is open to producers who are consigning pigs to feeder pig sales in Delaware, Maryland and Pennsylvania. Pigs must be tagged with Delaware or Maryland tags, however. These are available from the state veterinarian's office in Dover or from the Sussex County extension office in Georgetown, Del.

The event starts with check-in and weighing of pigs from 7:30 to

9:30 a.m. Judging begins at 10 a.m. There are two weight divisions—41 to 50 pounds, and 51 to 60 pounds. Prizes of \$25, \$15, and \$10 will be awarded to the top three pens in each division. An entry consists of six pigs per pen. Producers may enter one pen in each weight division.

The sale takes place at 2 p.m. This will be a good opportunity for FFA and 4-H club members to buy their pigs for the 1982 Delaware State Fair hog shows.

For more information and entry forms, contact Richard Fowler, University of Delaware Extension livestock specialist, in the department of animal science, 302/738-2523. Entries must be in by March 27.

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