



Brockett's Ag Advice

By John E. Brockett
Farm Management Agent
Lewistown Extension Office

Problems in raising calves

As I visit farms, I have made a lot of observations on calf and heifer raising. It is surprising that more farmers do not have more

problems with their calves—I mean death losses and health problems.

They do have growth and appearance problems which will

eventually transfer into economic problems.

Look at this partial list of problems then ask yourself if you are guilty of some or all of these:

- **Hay racks** that allow large quantities of hay to fall on to or be pulled on to the floor. This leads to dirty feed, possible disease, and generally internal parasites. Hay racks should be constructed so very little hay ever leaves the rack unless it is going into the animal's belly.

- **Dirty water** or a water tub that is shared with mature animals. Either case usually means reduced consumption of water or parasites or disease or a combination.

- **Dirty and/or wet bedding**—this is a major problem of our dairy

farms. Results in lack of comfort—usually most of the heifers try to get into the driest area. However, some or all of them often will wind up in the wet. Lack of comfort, parasites, respiratory disease, feed energy going into fighting cold and wet are all uneconomical measures

- **Draft** and I'm not talking about a gentle breeze on a hot, summer day, but rather a cold charge of air playing its disastrous tune over that defenseless baby. The draft could also be warm air movement over that calf such as some people cause when they put the vent fan in the calf area with the mistaken belief that they are doing the calves a favor. Actually they are pulling all of the warm but moisture filled and germ laden air from the barn over those poor little critters.

- **Dirty feed boxes**—dirty from stale feed or from manure or from cat hair or from wet bedding. To compound the problem the person feeding the calf then dumps fresh grain on top of this mess. Result is a big problem. Stale feed or dirt in the box should be very unappetizing to you as a person. Don't you think the calf reacts to the bad odor and taste just like you would?

CHEAP FEED: One of my biggest gripes—we have a milk surplus but dairymen still try to buy milk replacer based on cost as the sole factor. That is ridiculous. Personally, I feel that all dairymen should use sour colostrum and/or whole milk. Do any of you feel that you can buy a superior feed for your calves? I know some of you operate on the basis that you can save a few bucks with replacer, even though I doubt the savings is as much as you think. If you are going the replacer route, then buy the best quality replacer you can get (it will be a milk-based replacer)

- **Dirty freshening conditions** surprisingly this is one area where you as dairymen have improved. That doesn't mean it is all peaches and cream with freshening con-

ditions because I just said improved, not become great. There are still a lot of rather sad situations for freshening. They are guaranteed to give that poor little baby two strikes before she even comes to bat. To aggravate the problem, the raw umbilical cord is allowed to hang in wet, dirty bedding sucking up all kinds of disease organisms. Finally as a crowning gesture to assure that calf a handicap some of you make little effort to get colostrum into it until it is convenient. By the way, spraying iodine on the outside of the cord is not too worthwhile because any diseases that are going to enter the body enter via the straw-like interior of the cord, not the outside surface.

- **Parasite Control.** Many dairymen who routinely deworm cows never even give their calves and heifers a second thought. Why? Calves and heifers should be wormed at least twice a year. Many herds could probably eliminate worming cows if they practiced a good calf worming program. Furthermore it is a lot less expensive to worm young cattle than cows. I would agree that it takes more work. Then let's not forget the external parasites. Your young cattle could still get lice. It is quite easy to check them. Just grab a tuft of hair over the pins—if they have lice you will see the hair come off as if it was chewed off, which it was. Treat them if you see this problem.

- **Improper use of calf hutches:** Calf hutches can be lifesavers if they are used properly. They should be moved periodically to a new location. That will help prevent a buildup of disease organisms. Some farms have been using hutches for a number of years without repairing or maintaining them. Jagged nails, such as I saw recently because of a pulled off board, could result in a cut for either the calf or the calf feeder. Hutch roofs that are caved in or have holes should be fixed otherwise the calves will get wet.

SELF-LOCKING FEED THRU FENCE



3 Sizes: Calves - Small
Heifers - Adjustable (Shown)
Cows - Large

CUSTOM BUILT QUALITY PRODUCTS

- Headgates
- Spring Latches
- Hog Equipment
- Blocking Chutes
- 3 Pt. Hog Crate
- No-chute Hog Trailers
- Portable Welding
- Gates
- Barnyard Fence
- Feed Thru Fence
- Hay Wagons
- Feed Carts
- 3 Round Bale Carriers

Call For More Information-Free Estimates

KREIDER MFG. CO.

Building & Welding

(717) 665-6259 (717) 626-1862

LET Ag Tec HANDLE ALL YOUR SPRAYING NEEDS



give your vegetables wrap around protection

Featuring:

- 190 MPH Air Stream
- Rotating Head (3 Pt. Hitch or Pull-Type) Sprays With The Wind
- Low Volume Efficiency Reduces Chemical & Fuel Cost



SHORT ON CASH?

If So Consider Our 3 Yr. Leasing Program Available On Ag Tec Sprayers Only See Us For Details

Lancaster County's Only Dealer Specializing In Sprayer Sales & Service

LESTER A. SINGER

96 N. Ronks Rd. Ronks, PA 17572

(717) 687-6712

Mon. - Fri. 8 to 5; Sat. 8 to 12

SPRING SALE

The STIHL 011AVEQ

A Lot of Saw in a Little Package.



This compact, lightweight saw offers many professional features like Stihl's heavy-duty, anti-vibration system, automatic chain oiling, a specially-impregnated, long-life cylinder and more. It's a lot more saw for the money. It's a Stihl.

IT'S NOT JUST A BARGAIN, IT'S A STIHL®

Hurry To Your Dealer Now!

A & B SALES & SERVICE

2 Miles South of Rt 23 Along 772 Thru Monterey RD 1 Ronks PA

BOMBERGER'S STORE, INC.

Newport Rd Elm PA 717 665 2407

STOLTZFUS WOODWORK

RD Gap PA Box 183 1 Mile North Rt 897 Ronks PA

MARTIN HARDWARE & EQUIPMENT CO.

Rt 501 1 1/2 Miles South of Schaefferstown PA Phone 717 949 6817

WES STAUFFER ENGINES & EQUIPMENT

RD 3 Ephrata PA Phone (717) 738 4215 Ephrata Exit New Rt 222 1/2 Mile West on Rt 322 Turn left onto Pleasant Valley Rd

STIHL®

NUMBER ONE WORLDWIDE

SCHLESSMAN'S

HYBRID CORN

PREMIUM SINGLE CROSSES

- **SX-725** - New Improved Standability, 112 Days, Excellent Yield
- **SX-650** - High Yielding, Good Standability, 110 Day, Short Stalk - Imbred Used In This Cross Was Most Wanted Across U.S. By Most Seed Companies
- **SX-810** - High Yielding Good Standability, 118 Days
★ Resistant to Carbona Race 3 Disease

**GARDEN SEEDS
ONION SETS
SEED POTATOES**

**Full Line
of
Garden Supplies**

Free Catalogs Available

SEED OATS

TWINES

A NEW Alfalfa - Boyd's 84W

- Verticillium Wilt Resistant
- Anthracnose Resistant • Phytophthora Root Rot

Very Limited Supply - Place Your Order Now

WHOLESALE & RETAIL

BOYDELL FARMS

302 Iona Rd., Lebanon, PA 17042
Phone: 717-272-8943