

Study Sheds Light On Cold-Weather Calf Feeding, Housing

Contrary to the practice of many calf managers, who increase the amount of milk and feeding frequency during extremely cold weather, a recent trial at the University of Minnesota showed these increases are not needed if calves are consuming a high quality calf starter.

The study also showed no advantage in dividing milk replacer feedings from two into three times.

It doesn't mean milk isn't critically important. But certainly there's no evidence for the need of feeding the extra amount, according to test spokesmen.

John Ryan of Madison Silo Co. of Pennsylvania, distributor of Poly Dome Calf Hutches, brought the study to the attention of Lancaster Farming and pointed out how the tests were conducted.

Calves in one group were fed 0.6% of birth weight in milk replacer solids, twice daily until

weaning. Calves in the second group were given the same amount twice daily with the amount increased by 0.2% of body weight of every 10° in temperature drop below 30°F.

Calves in the third group also received increased amounts of replacer as temperatures dropped in three equal feedings.

Starting on the fourth day, all calves were offered starter on a free choice basis. Starting at two weeks, warm water was fed between milk replacer feedings.

On the coldest days, calves in the second and third groups were receiving almost twice as much replacer as calves in group one.

Weight gains for all three groups were similar, since calves fed less milk replacer ate enough additional starter to make up the difference.

The advantage in providing

extra starter to calves during cold weather—rather than feeding extra replacer—is that starter is less expensive.

The U of M researchers recommend weaning four-week-old calves during extremely cold weather only if they are consuming at least 2 lbs./day of starter at weaning, then rapidly increase consumption to 3-4 lbs./day.

Calves fed cow's milk should receive 10 lbs./day, twice a day, based on winter hutch trials at South Dakota State University.

Calves fed 10 lbs./day in two feedings gained 1.34 lbs./day at SDSU. That compares to calves fed 8 lbs. to one feeding that gained .79 lb./day.

Calves fed 8 lbs./day of replacer, fortified with ¼ lb. of a fat-why powder, gained 1.28 lbs./day.

Five-week-old calves should be consuming at least 1½ lbs./day of starter when weaned during cold weather.

The U of M trials also compared two types of hutches: domed fiberglass and 4x8 wood, in a location not well protected from northwest winds.

Calves raised in the domed hutches gained weight the most rapidly, due to increased consumption of starter, say the researchers. The location of the starter pail may encourage the consumption, since the calves pass their noses over it frequently.

Also, calves in the domed hutches were "more active and social" than calves in wood hutches, probably because the fiberglass hutches tended to be warmer and brighter on cold days, say the researchers.

No calves died in the U of M study, but two calves raised in wood hutches were treated for hypothermia and hypoglycemia. But, had they not been treated and moved to warm housing, they probably would have died, note the researchers.

Both of the sick calves had been weaned from the high-milk diets and were consuming below average quantities of starter when they became sick.

Tri-County Swine To Change Hands

LEBANON — Carl Martin and Robert High announce the sale of Tri-County Swine Systems to John Zimmerman and Terry Weaver, effective Jan. 1, 1987. Both of the new owners are Lancaster County natives and have extensive agribusiness experience with swine systems on a local and national basis.

"Tri-County's reputation as a designer and builder of top quality swine confinement systems along with their after-sales service has led to many satisfied customers during the past seven years," according to John Zimmerman, who is currently employed by Tri-County and will serve as sales manager after the transition. "Plans are to continue this tradition along with professional

planning services for any size project for current and prospective customers."

Existing product lines such as solid steel rod farrowing crates, gestation stalls, and hog fencing currently manufactured by Tri-County will remain unchanged. Other popular products such as feed bins, augers, feeders, ventilation, North Carolina's HOG SLAT and many others will be supplied as usual.

According to Terry Weaver, who will serve as general manager, few changes will be noticed by Tri-County's customers after the transition, since the business location at 608 East Evergreen Road, Lebanon, phone number and most personnel will not change.

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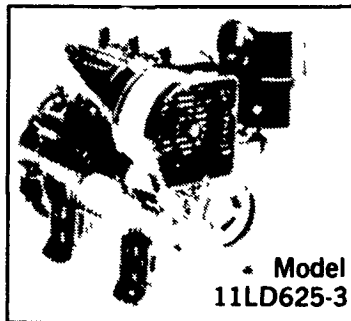
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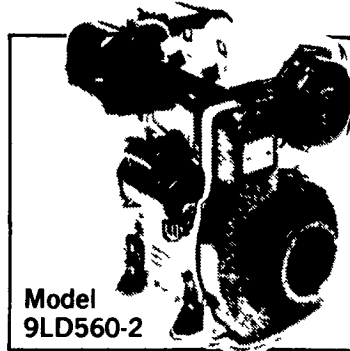
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