

DAIRY TIPS

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CALVES AND HEIFERS

Are you raising high quality replacement heifers? Producers should incorporate these practices and guidelines into their herd replacement programs:

1. Force-feed high quality colostrum to calves immediately after birth. Feed no hay or forages for the first two months of life. Provide calves water, even when milk is being fed.
2. Follow a Purina heifer program that will provide growth rates of 1.8 pounds per day. Heifers will calve by 24 months of age, at 54 inch wither heights, weighing 1200 lbs AFTER calving.

3. Evaluate whether your first lactation heifers are "keeping up" with older cows. DHIA records are a valuable tool to allow evaluation. Peak milk production of first, second, and third + lactation animals is one measure to watch. Also evaluate 305-day M.E. (mature equivalent) of all age groups. Persistency of heifers should be higher than that of cows.

Heifers that calve at low body weight and small frame size will not "keep up" with older cows. Milk production across the herd will be reduced, along with efficiency of production and profitability.

Contact your Purina representative for further evaluation of your situation.

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