

# High Production Starts At Calfhood

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With so many things to worry about, farmers often forget that a healthy cow begins at calfhood. Proper vaccination schedules, balanced feed rations, and well-designed facilities all play a role in producing quality replacements.

With more and more dairy herds expanding, dairy farmers are looking at contracting heifer care out to area farmers. Here are two local farmers who specialize in raising high performing heifer replacements.

## Quality Care Essential For Young Calves

Glenn Moyer of Montgomery County specializes in raising calves from just days after they're born to about five months old.

After purchasing a small farm called Westfield Lane Farm in 1985, Moyer quickly realized that he didn't have the land to produce forages. Evaluating his assets and looking to marketing his skills in calf care, he began raising calves for area dairy farmers in 1995.

Today Moyer raises 1,200 calves a year for five dairy farmers located in Berks, Chester, Lancaster, and Lebanon Counties. According to Moyer, he can provide the attention



**Glenn Moyer raises 1,200 calves to five months for five dairy farmers in the southeast Pennsylvania region. He uses quality calf care to maintain a mortality rate of less than one percent.**



**Tim Saber is a farmer who turned to raising heifers after going out of the dairy business in the late 80's. Once they freshen, he leases his quality animals out to dairy producers in Pennsylvania, New York, and Maryland.**

and care to calf care that too many dairy farmers no longer have the time to do.

Thanks to his attention to detail, Moyer's custom calf care facility touts a calf mortality rate of less than one percent. He hasn't seen a case of scours on his facility in more than three years, and calves leave Westfield Lane Farms with a better start than they would get on most dairy farms.

Here are some of the calf care techniques Moyer employs.

### *Bottle Feeding Provides Healthy Start*

Moyer feeds more than 150 calves twice a day with bottles because he feels that bottle feeding improves digestion and causes less infection than bucket feeding.

"The bottle requires the calf to arch her neck in such a way that it closes the esophageal groove," said Moyer. "It also keeps the calf from gulping too quickly and stimulates the production of saliva, which includes an enzyme that aids in digestion."

To increase the energy level provided to each calf, Moyer uses 8.8 ounces of a 20/20 all-milk milk replacer instead of the recommended 8 ounces.

"We also use one percent more powder for every degree the temperature falls below 32°," said Moyer. "This allows us to get the same performance from our calves during the winter time as during the summer."

### *Vaccinations Protect Against Diseases*

Shortly after the calves arrive at the farm, Moyer vaccinates them for early-calfhood vaccines, such as clostridium H. somus, pasteurilla H N, and Nasalgen. He also topdresses