

# PRODUCTIVE AND PROFITABLE CALVING



A live, healthy calf and productive cow starts with feed testing to make sure nutrient requirements are met. If the forage source is not adequate, testing will allow for proper supplementation. Maintaining cows in a proper body condition is essential to minimize calving difficulties, maximize milk production and allow for a quick recovery post-calving to set the cow up for a timely rebreeding.

Cows and calves need adequate shelter and bedding to keep them as clean and dry as possible. Clean, dry conditions will allow cattle to more efficiently use the feed they have and will help to keep calves healthier and more vigorous.

Obstetrical procedures and C-sections can be stressful for producer and cow alike. They can also be painful – ask your veterinarian for recommendations for anti-inflammatory pain control medication to get the cow (and the calf) back on track more quickly.

Colostrum is an essential component of calf health. Ideally, the cow should produce enough quality colostrum for the calf to receive at least 3 litres in the first 12 hours of life. However, heifers, older cows and cows in poor body condition may not produce colostrum in enough quantity or quality to get the calf off to a good start. If in doubt, feeding a high quality colostrum replacer to the calf as soon as possible after birth (ideally in the first 12 hours of life) will help to get the calf off to a better start and hopefully enable the calf to maintain better health in the first 4-6 weeks of life. Ask your veterinarian for advice on proper colostrum management and appropriate products to use.

Work proactively with your veterinarian to develop plans to maintain a productive and efficient herd with more pounds of weaned calf and more cows bred in a timely manner. Maintaining an up to date veterinarian-client-patient relationship (VCPR) will allow your veterinarian to make effective recommendations and assist you in reaching your goal of an efficient, profitable herd of cattle.

