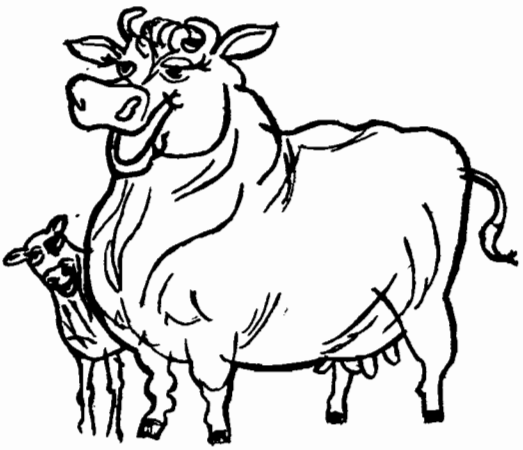
DAIRY cattle
REPLACEMENTS

MANAGEMENT AND COST TIPS



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE
MADERA COUNTY

MANAGEMENT DECISIONS ABOUT REPLACEMENTS

What does it cost to raise a replacement dairy heifer in the San Joaquin Valley?

A fair answer to this question may be found in the cost data on pages 5 and 6 of this bulletin. These costs were compiled from ranchers by several San Joaquin Valley Farm Advisors and an Extension Farm Management Specialist. This cost data has different meaning to the commercial heifer grower than to the dairyman.

To the commercial replacement grower, it represents a good guide for cost of raising a replacement. On a short-term outlook, knowing the approximate sale value of his springer heifers, it's a simple matter to calculate the risk of being in the replacement business at any given time. On the long-term outlook, it gives him a cost figure with which he can compare with what he thinks they will sell for some 6 to 12 or 24 months from now.

To the dairyman, this set of figures is a good guide to what it will cost him to raise his own replacements. It does not tell him, though, that he can purchase his replacements for this figure or less and come out ahead. The dairyman must be aware of the fact, that about three out of the 10 heifers he buys for replacements, he will probably cull for one reason or another. If his herd has a higher production potential than average, he would have to pay a high price for replacements with known production records behind them so he could maintain his herd production level. So, to the dairyman, there are some hidden costs that he would have to add on to our figures if he were comparing the cost of raising to the cost of purchasing heifers someone else had raised.

In the San Joaquin Valley, I think we can safely say that it pays the good dairyman to either raise his own replacements or contract with a grower and have his own heifers raised for him. Then this set of figures can serve as a guide in making this decision.

THIRTEEN RULES FOR RAISING HEALTHY CALVES

This is a preventive medicine program adapted from the American Dairy Science Association and the American Veterinary Medicine Association.

1. Raise calves in individual pens. Make small structures. Move them to new ground and leave at least 6 feet spacing between pens. This method helps prevent spread of disease.

2. Keep pens clean and sanitary all the time. Give them a thorough cleaning between calves and an opportunity to be exposed to sunlight after cleaning.

3. Do not paint calf pens with lead paint nor leave paint cans around. Lead paints are POISONOUS.

4. Avoid wet bedding, dampness and drafts. Solid siding or protectors can be used in the winter.

5. Dip the navel in iodine soon after birth. This prevents entry of infection.

6. Feed colostrum shortly after birth. Calves should nurse within an hour after birth or be given assistance. Colostrum contains Vitamin A and antibodies essential for health and disease resistance. Colostrum for 36-48 hours is sufficient.

7. Allow the cow to lick the calf, or it may be rubbed dry with disposable material.

8. Develop a sound vaccination program with your veterinarian.

9. Remove extra or supernumerary teats as soon as you can definitely establish which are extra.

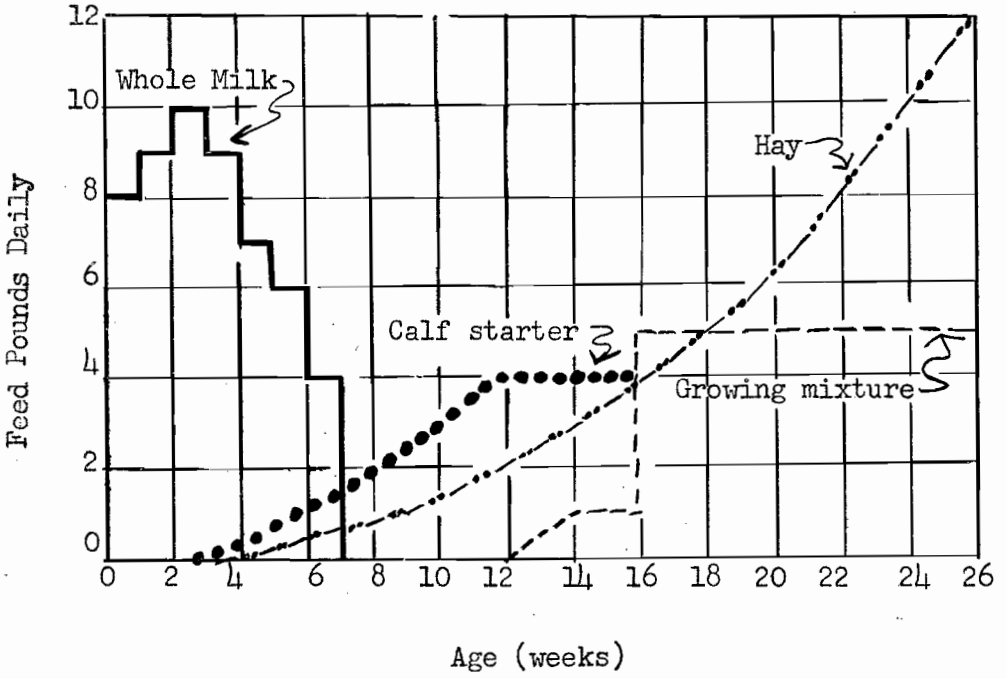
10. Dehorn early. There are several methods. An electric dehorning iron is a convenient and satisfactory tool. If caustic potash is used, dehorn prior to 3-4 days old. Be sure to apply a grease ring around the horn area to prevent the caustic from running and causing blindness. Avoid using excessive amounts of caustic.

11. Use only clean, sanitary utensils. Successful calf raising requires sanitary feeding utensils. Scrub thoroughly after each feeding. Give particular care to milk nipple pails. Feeding pails should be cleaned as thoroughly as milking equipment.

12. Do not over or underfeed. Overfeeding is a common cause of digestive disturbances leading to scours and sometimes death. A good rule to follow the first two weeks of the calf's life is to feed one pound of whole milk for each ten pounds of body weight. Weigh or measure the milk at each feeding and make all feed changes gradually to avoid digestive disturbances. Feed the calf twice daily and be sure the milk temperature is between 90-100° Fahrenheit at time of feeding.

13. Establish a proven feeding program for healthy, growing calves. After successfully starting the calf on whole milk during its first 2-3 weeks of life, any of several methods may be used. Skimmed milk is generally economical. If dry skim is used, reconstitute at rate of one pound of dry skim to nine pounds of water. Colostrum milk can always be used. Milk substitutes can be used satisfactorily. Many kinds of calf starters now on the market give excellent results if they are fed increasingly until the calf is seven weeks old, when it is weaned from whole milk entirely. After this, they are fed

a maximum of 4 to 5 pounds of starter with plenty of top quality hay. The following graph, taken from Agricultural Extension Service Circular 107 "Raising Dairy Calves in California," by S. W. Mead, indicates a good feeding schedule for large breeds based upon their age in weeks. Feed Jerseys or Guernseys about three-fourths these amounts.



COSTS TO RAISE DAIRY HEIFERS IN THE SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY -- 1959

For Holsteins With Initial Calf Weight of 90 Lbs.

0 to 2 months: Weight 90 to 148 lbs.	Example	Your Costs
Milk substitute for 60 days less the first 3 da: 45 lbs. @ $16.00 CWT	$ 7.20	
Calf concentrate: 10 lbs. 1st mo. and 70 lbs. 2nd mo. = 80 lbs. @ $3.75 CWT.	3.00	
Alfalfa hay: 75 lbs. @ $25.00 per T	.94	
Total feed cost 0-2 mo.	$ 11.14	
Original cost of calf	35.00	
Labor	5.00	
Veterinary and veterinary supplies	3.00	
Bedding	1.50	
Buildings, pens and equipment	1.50	
Death loss @ 5%	2.35	
Miscellaneous, including interest (48¢)	2.00	
Total cost to 2 months	$ 61.49	
2 to 6 months: Weight 148 to 355 lbs.		
Concentrate: 400 lbs. @ $3.75 CWT	$ 15.00	
Hay: 600 lbs. @ $25 per T	7.50	
Total feed cost 2-6 mo.	22.50	
Labor	3.00	
Bedding	1.00	
Miscellaneous, including interest ($1.49)	3.50	
Total cost 2 to 6 months	$ 30.00	
Accumulated total cost to 6 months	$ 91.49	
6 to 12 months: Weight 355 to 632 lbs.		
Concentrates: 450 lbs. @ $60.00 per T	$ 13.50	
Hay: 2160 lbs. @ $25.00 per T	27.00	
Total feed cost 6-12 mo.	40.50	
Labor	4.50	
Miscellaneous, including interest ($3.40)	6.40	
Total cost 6 to 12 months	$ 51.40	
Accumulated total cost to 12 months	$142.89	
12 to 24 months: Weight 632 to 1069 lbs.		
Hay: 4 tons @ $22.00 per T	$ 88.00	
Labor: (figured on some pasturing)	6.00	
Breeding	7.00	
Miscellaneous, taxes, rent	6.00	
Interest @ 6%	11.78	
Total cost 12 to 24 months	$118.78	
Accumulated total cost to 24 months	$261.67	

Costs and data in the above table were compiled and co-ordinated by Burt Burlingame, Farm Management Specialist.

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