

Shasta 1969

## SO YOU WANT TO RAISE DAIRY REPLACEMENT HEIFERS

Have you considered:

A SOURCE OF ANIMALS

In most cases if you can buy animals from the local dairies, you will be able to get production records which you should get by all means and identify the calves immediately. If you work through calf brokers, you will be money ahead in checking up on their reputability with other people who have dealt with them. There are a number of good, honest people dealing in dairy calves, but like all industries there are some who are not so reputable and you can be hurt.

THE FACILITIES

If you're working with calves from zero to two months of age, you should consider individual elevated calf stalls. Along with these go the feeding equipment, the nipple pails or bottles if you prefer that style, or buckets and pails for the calves milk. You will need hay feeders and grain feeders all to be set up in a manner that they can be handled in the individual elevated stall. We recommend the elevated stall, slatted stall, or grated stall for better calf health and sanitation measures.

The next set of facilities to consider is the equipment and handling facilities for those animals from two to six months of age. You will need group pens, no less than three for grouping the animals according to size. Hay feeders for all three pens; grain feeders for all three pens. You will need a set of working corrals so that you can cut out individual animals for veterinary service or individual checking. You will need sheds or barns for protection from the weather and you will need feed storage for bulk concentrates and for hay. When figuring the amount of storage you will need, you need to consider that the heifers will eat 1100 pounds of concentrate in a 4-month period and 300 pounds of hay in a 4-month period. This multiplied by the number of calves you have, together with the consideration that you will be carrying these animals on through the time when they are ready to sell as springers, they will add on another 720 pounds of concentrate in the three months that they go to nine months of age and another one-half ton of hay to the nine month stage. When they are 24 months of age, they will use another four tons of hay and 1500 pounds of concentrate. The principal reason for bulk storage is to get the bulk rate when purchasing which cuts costs considerably.

The facilities required in the six to nine month stage are pasture or pens (have at least two pens) have hay feeders for both and grain feeders for both. You will want a loading chute because these animals are getting large enough now so that if you want to move them you will want to load them in a truck, it is much easier to load them in a chute than it is to try and drive them up some makeshift affair. Also, you will want a squeeze chute at this stage because there will be certain veterinary practices and checks you will want to make on these heifers handling them at a later date.

From the 9 to 24-month stage, the principal facilities that will be needed of course will be pasture, hayfeeders, and concentrate feeders.

## VETERINARY SERVICES

If you are not experienced along this line it would be well for you to investigate the possibility of a contract with a local veterinarian to handle your veterinary work and to advise you on herd health. You should keep accurate records on these animals from the time that you receive them until they are sold so that you can give information to prospective buyers.

## FEED

A milk source or milk replacer is a must for baby calves. A factor quite often overlooked is feed sources and types. If a producer spends a little time with pencil and paper and telephone inquiring around about feed sources and types, quite often he can reduce his feed bill considerably without reducing the quality of the feed.

## BREEDING

As the animals become older, you must consider the date to have them bred. Some dairymen like their animals bred to calve at two years old. Others like to have them calve at 30 months. There is a widespread practice of running a small beef bull with the heifers and pasture breeding them and then having the animals' pregnancy checked and marketing them accordingly. However, it would be to your advantage especially if you know the production record of the dams of the heifers that you have to artificially inseminate and practice estrus control in order to bring in a large group of heifers at one time so that you could provide a truckload at one particular time to a buyer. There are a number of artificial insemination technicians in the area and you should contact them about costs of breeding and availability of semen.

## EQUIPMENT

Equipment is an important factor in the efficiency and convenience of any operation involving livestock. One small piece of equipment, but very important that is quite often overlooked, is your own brand to put on these animals for identification. With the increased facilities for shipping and transportation now, it is quite easy for a livestock producer to lose animals through lack of identification and the brands are quite easily to apply. With any size operation, you need to consider hauling both the animals and feed and bedding for them. This involves a vehicle.

Feeding equipment is also necessary - from milk feeding utensils on up through the concentrate and hay feeding. Some means of cleaning up either by plowing the matter under or moving pens from one place to another on skids or stock piling and hauling on to fields at a later date is necessary and this generally requires some type of tractor. This can also be done on a contract basis as can the hauling.

## PASTURE

Pasture is very important in inexpensive production of dairy replacement heifers and is a must. This pasture must be of good quality and have adequate fencing in

order to keep the animals separate from bulls especially as they become more mature. Identifying the individual calves for your records, especially where you have certificates of productions of dams for them is a must. Most dairy-men use tatoos or plastic type of eartags that cannot be easily removed.

## MARKETS

The last thing to be considered and probably the most important, the reason why you are in the business is in the first place is a market. Again, we have three:

1. Local Dairies. Quite often local dairymen are looking for replacement heifers if they have lost a cow or need to increase their milk production from time to time.
2. Auctions. There are auctions that deal exclusively with dairy cattle and also general livestock auctions.
3. Private Treaty. A private treaty between a dairy heifer producer and large brokers, especially when a quality product and reputation have been developed, is sometimes the most satisfactory arrangement for marketing dairy replacement heifers.

## LAST BUT NOT LEAST

This type of operation takes money with no return for a period of 24 - 30 months if a program of day old calf to springer heifer is followed. The operation can be divided into several portions and followed on a shorter term basis. In any case, be sure you have adequate financing.

There are a number of plans available through your local farm advisors office dealing with housing, equipment, and facilities. Feel free to call on him for help at any time.

Wallace E. Tyler  
Farm Advisor  
1969

SAMPLE COSTS TO RAISE DAIRY HEIFERS

IN SHASTA COUNTY

1969

Per Heifer

0 to 2 months: Weight 90 to 200 lbs.

Milk substitute: 60 days except first 3; 50 lbs. @ 25¢ per lb.	\$ 12.50
Calf concentrate: 15 lbs. first month and 85 lbs. second month; 100 lbs. @ 43.80 per cwt.	3.80
Alfalfa hay: 75 lbs. @ \$25 per ton	<u>.94</u>
Total feed cost 0 to 2 months	\$ 17.24
Original cost of calf	\$ 45.00
Labor	12.50
Veterinarian and veterinary supplies	2.00
Bedding and tractor	2.40
Buildings, pens and equipment	3.60
Death loss: @ 5%	2.25
Miscellaneous	<u>1.00</u>
TOTAL cost to 2 months	\$ 85.99

2 to 6 months: Weight 200 to 500 lbs.

Concentrate: 1100 lbs. @ \$3.90 per cwt.	\$ 42.90
Hay: 240 lbs. @ \$30 per ton	<u>3.60</u>
Total feed cost 2 to 6 months	\$ 46.50
Labor	\$ 2.50
Bedding	1.00
Miscellaneous	<u>1.00</u>
TOTAL cost 2 to 6 months	\$ 51.00

ACCUMULATED TOTAL COST to 6 months

\$136.99

6 to 9 months: Weight 500 to 750 lbs.

Concentrates: 720 lbs. @ \$3.70 per cwt.	\$ 26.64
Hay: 1080 lbs. @ \$28 per ton	<u>10.94</u>
Total feed cost 6 to 9 months	\$ 37.58
Labor	\$ 2.50
Miscellaneous	<u>2.00</u>
TOTAL cost 6 to 9 months	\$ 42.08

ACCUMULATED TOTAL COST to 9 months

\$179.07

9 to 24 months: Weight 750 to 1200 lbs.

Hay and hay equivalent: 4 tons @ \$20	\$ 80.00
Concentrate: 1500 @ \$3.70 per cwt.	55.50
Labor: figured on some pasturing	2.50
Breeding and pregnancy test	7.50
Miscellaneous: taxes, rent, etc.	3.00
interest: @ 8%	<u>12.00</u>
TOTAL cost 9 to 24 months	\$160.50

ACCUMULATED TOTAL COST to 24 months

\$339.57