

Topic of the Month

Meeting caloric requirements

Every so often, I see or hear something that really leaves an impression on me. For example, I remember attending a lecture and learning that the daily calorie needs of a lactating Holstein cow are the equivalent of a person running two marathons a day. Pretty incredible.

In my years in practice, I also have an impression regarding the caloric needs of our dairy calves. So often, we examine calves who are sluggish, failing to thrive, or with pneumonia or some other issue. Through physical exams and necropsies, it becomes clear that many of these calves have the same underlying problem- lack of adequate nutrition.

We like to feed calves two quarts of 20:20 milk replacer twice a day. Consider that whole milk protein:fat ratio is more like 28:30, and it becomes clear that traditional milk feeding strategies are obsolete.

In recent years, tremendous strides have been made in calf feeding. Higher protein, lower fat milk replacers have been developed to encourage frame growth with protein while keeping the fat content lower to increase starter intake.

Regardless of your calf feeding strategy, it should be apparent that there needs to be a strategy. As the cold weather arrives, take the time to ensure good feeding for calves, as well as supplemental warmth such as calf blankets to protect the health of your calves.

Commodity Futures

Prices

As of November 30, 2017

Corn	\$3.42/bu
Soybean Meal	\$324.50/ton
Milk (October)	\$15.37/cwt
Beef (Live cattle)	\$119.90/cwt

Practice News

- Calf blankets are available for purchase from the clinic. They come in a smaller size ideal for baby Jersey calves, and a larger size suitable for baby Holstein calves.
- Our winter producer meeting is being planned for February 2018. Stay tuned for more information about the date and meeting topic.

In the News

- According to a recent article in *Progressive Dairyman*, The National Milk Producers Federation is supporting a proposal to change the way the way Federal Milk Marketing Order Class I base prices are calculated. This proposal will be presented to Congress for approval as part of the 2018 Farm Bill. The new system will be based on an average of the Class III and Class IV prices plus a 74 cent per CWT increase to the monthly skim milk value in each FMMO. According to Jim Mulhern, president and CEO of NMPF. "This change locks in the value of the 'higher-of' pricing approach, protects the integrity of the federal order system and aligns the policy interests of dairy farmers and processors as we begin work with Congress on a new farm bill."

Upcoming Events

- The 102nd Pennsylvania Farm Show will be held January 6-13, 2018. This year is scheduled to feature a "Calving Corner" where the public can view live calvings. Veterinarians will be present to attend calvings as needed.
- Our annual winter producers meeting will be held in February 2018.