

Jody G. Holthaus
District Extension Agent
Livestock and Natural Resources

Calving Season Woes

And the beat goes on!! This calving season seems to be in slow motion for us. We had a heifer that gave all the classic symptoms of going to calve soon. We locked her up tight, to help her make good choices, on where to drop her calf. That was 2 weeks ago! Her udder kept getting more and more swollen, but she continued to eat and seemed to be in no real stress. The only stress was ours, having to watch and wait until we couldn't help ourselves. When I "sleeved" her, everything seemed fine, that was 4 days ago. Alas, today we have a healthy calf!

Unfortunately, there are times when calving does not go so smoothly. When heifers have a tough delivery, sometimes they won't claim their calves, or worse yet they die. I really don't like to feed calves with esophageal tube feeders, unless absolutely necessary. We all know how important colostrum, milk, and electrolytes are to calf survival, so if you have to "tube them", then do it correctly.

There's a pretty neat video produced by the Wisconsin Dairy Extension team you can watch bit.ly/2HyqcwW.

In a nutshell, before using make sure the tube of the feeder doesn't have any rough edges that can cut or scratch the calf's esophagus, these rough spots can also harbor bacteria.

Make sure the calf can stand or sit upright on its sternum, if they are laying flat, do not use. Before inserting kink the tube so liquid can pass out until the tube is in the right place. Slide the tube down the left side of the calf's tongue, which will make the calf swallow, when they swallow continue to pass the tube down keep the calf's nose below its ears.

When the tube is down you should be able to feel two tubes by pressing on the outside of the calf's neck. One is the trachea, the other is the tube feeder. If you slide the tube back and forth and can't feel it moving, or notice sprints of air in the at the end of the tube, then you have likely put it in the trachea. Remove the tube and try again. If placed correctly release the liquid and let gravity take over. When empty, remove the tube in one swift motion.

Be sure to carefully clean and sanitize the feeder after use.

March 13, 2020

David G. Hallauer
District Extension Agent
Crops & Soils/Horticulture

David is out of town.

March 13, 2020

Cindy Williams
Meadowlark Extension District
Food, Nutrition, Health, and Safety

No news from Cindy this week.

March 13, 2020

Nancy Nelson
Meadowlark Extension District
Family Life

No news from Nancy this week.