

## Dairy Department

### CARE OF FRESHENING COWS

Circular No. 16 of the Iowa Experiment Station at Ames, edited by H. H. Kildee of the Dairy Husbandry Section, contains an interesting discussion of the care, feed, and management of the dairy herd. It is a publication that should be in the hands of every dairyman of the state, and particularly of those just beginning. It starts with a discussion of the value of dairying, gives suggestions as to selecting the herd, how to feed and house it, the value of the different feeds, the care of the animals, the common diseases and their treatment, in fact it is a short yet valuable compendium of dairy farm practice. The following extract is taken from this circular:

The proper time to begin feeding a cow for milk production is six to eight weeks prior to freshening. She should have at least this length of time to rest and prepare for the next lactation period. The feeds given at this time should meet the following requirements: Rest and cool out the digestive tract, supply nourishment for the growth of the foetus or unborn calf, and build up the flesh and strength of the cow herself.

#### Preparation

For the cows that are to freshen during the summer or early fall it is a good plan to have a small pasture set aside so that they may have abundance of pasture grass and not be molested by the other cows. In addition to this a few pounds of ground oats and in some cases a small quantity of bran will be sufficient. Cows that are to freshen during the winter should receive from 20 to 25 pounds of corn silage, all the clover or alfalfa hay they desire, and a grain mixture of 3 parts ground oats, 2 parts bran, and 1 part oil meal. The amount of grain per day is to be governed by the individual animal. Animals thin in flesh may be given a small quantity of corn, but should not be crowded, but rather fleshed up gradually. Timothy hay and cottonseed meal are not desirable as they are rather constipating, while laxative feeds are needed at this time. Too large a quantity of corn is likely to have a bad effect upon the system. It is well to reduce the ration slightly just prior to calving, as by so doing the danger of milk fever and after calving troubles is decreased to some extent.

A few days before calving put the cow in a clean, disinfected, well bedded box stall. If her bowels are not moving freely, a dose of  $\frac{3}{4}$  to 1 pound of Epsom salts, or one quart of raw linseed oil will prove very beneficial. A grain ration of 2 parts bran and 1 part oil meal is very good at this time.

For a few days after calving the cow's drinking water should be lukewarm. In addition to alfalfa or clover hay and a small quantity of silage, she should be fed bran mash or a small allowance of bran, oil meal and ground oats. If the cow does not pass the afterbirth promptly and the man in charge does not understand the anatomy of the reproductive organs, a competent veterinarian should be called; that should be done also when the cow has difficulty in calving.

#### The First Month

If the cow has been properly cared for the first three days she may then be placed on more dry and solid food. The manner in which she is fed during the next thirty days determines largely the character of the work she will do during her lactation period.

Experienced feeders of beef cattle realize that thirty days are required to get steers on full feed, and likewise the dairy cow needs to be given thirty days. Without doubt parturition weakens the digestive apparatus and heavy feeding soon after calving is liable to be followed by indigestion, bloat or impaction. During the first thirty days after parturition the maternal instinct is at its highest pitch, and during this time, if properly cared for, the cow can be brought to her greatest possible milk flow.

To do this the feeds must be suited to the individual cow's needs. Beginning on the fourth day with five pounds of grain daily, the ration should be increased slowly—say at the rate of  $\frac{1}{2}$  pound each alternate day. This rate of increase is rapid enough, for the cow will respond as well to a half pound increase as she will to a pound. This increase may continue just as long as the cow continues to increase profitably in her milk flow. When she ceases to respond, then the feed should be lessened in the same gradual manner for a few days and it will, as a rule, be noted that the cow will further increase in milk flow. The feed given on the day she begins to decline in milk determines practically the amount of grain she should receive. Much less than this amount will not compel her best work, and any additional feed will be worse than wasted.

The exact amount and quality of the food will be determined by the condition and individuality of the cows. Seldom do two cows demand to be fed in exactly the same way. Cows inclined toward beefiness require a narrow ration, or one containing a proportionately large amount of protein; cows of the strictly dairy type, inclined to work hard and become thin in flesh, need to be fed more extensively of foods rich in carbohydrates. Cows of large capacity and the ability to produce large volumes of milk require more than cows with less capacity and ability.

#### OPERATING THE CREAM SEPARATOR

To get the most efficient work out of the dairy separator requires a great deal of skill and careful attention to all the little details which go to make up the general separating operation.

One of the first requirements is that the machine be placed in the proper location, that all the working parts be carefully adjusted, oiled and kept in repair, and that the manufacturer's instructions be carried out to the letter. The machine should be thoroughly cleaned after each separation as small particles of dirt or milk left in one of the important parts may partially clog the cream or skim milk outlet, resulting in cream of a different grade than that desired and the loss of much fat in the skim milk. The separator is the hardest of all the milking utensils to keep in a clean, sweet and sanitary condition. The common practice of merely flushing the machine with water after the night's milking is separated is to be condemned. It is just as necessary to wash it carefully after each milking as it is to wash it at any time. The person to whom the care and management of the dairy separator is entrusted should be enough of a mechanic to keep all the parts in the best working order, to carefully regulate the speed of the machine, to properly adjust cream screw and to keep a steady supply of milk flowing into the machine. He must see that the machine sets level and on a firm foundation, that it is kept in the cleanest possible condition and that the milk is run through as quickly as possible after it comes from the cows. Under these conditions any of the standard makes of dairy separators will do almost perfect work, and with an ordinary herd of cows will pay for itself within a year because of the thoroughness with which the butterfat is removed from the milk.

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THE GRAIN GROWERS' GUIDE  
Winnipeg, Man.

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