



NSW DEPARTMENT OF
PRIMARY INDUSTRIES

Growing heifers - Readers' Note

This document is part of a larger publication. The remaining parts and full version of the publication can be found at:

<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/livestock/dairy-cattle/herd/manuals/growing-heifers>

Updated versions of this document can also be found at the above web address.

This document is subject to the disclaimers and copyright of the full version from which it is extracted. These disclaimers and copyright statements are available in the appropriate document at the above web address.

Animal welfare

Make sure you attend to the welfare of your calves and heifers at all times. Below is an extract from the *Australian Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals* (SCA 1992). It was compiled by the Animal Health Committee of the Standing Committee on Agriculture.

3. Artificial Rearing of Calves

- 3.1 Housing for artificially reared calves should be hygienic, with adequate ventilation, climate control and lighting. Flooring should be well drained with adequate dry lying space for each calf. Flooring and internal surfaces should not cause injury and should allow easy cleaning.
 - 3.2 Careful attention to group sizes, access to feed, milking shed location, ancillary accommodation, lighting, air inlets and outlets, handling facilities and stalls can alleviate problems of health, stress or aggression.
 - 3.3 For multiple calf rearing systems, where individual calf pens are used, these should be so made and located to allow each calf to see and hear other cattle (i.e. at least one other individual). 1.5 to 2.0 m² of floor area per calf should be provided to permit self-grooming and prevent overcrowding. The total shed volume should provide for at least 5.5 m³ per calf.
 - 3.4 In cold weather, adequate shelter or housing, and feeds with a high energy content should be provided.
 - 3.5 Calves should receive at least two litres of fresh or preserved colostrum or an approved substitute within the first 12 hours following birth. Thereafter, they should be fed on liquid milk, commercial milk-replacer or colostrum, in sufficient quantities to provide essential requirements for maintenance and growth. High quality pasture, hay or pellets should be available to calves from no later than 3 weeks of age to help in development of their digestive tracts.
- Hygienic calf feeding practices, including thorough daily cleansing of all equipment (feeding units, lines, bottles, nipples, troughs, etc.) are essential to protect calf health and welfare and to prevent diarrhoea.
- 3.6 Milk-replacers based on skim milk should not be fed to calves under three weeks of age, unless they are in a properly balanced formulated mixture of protein, fat and vitamins. Milk replacers should be reconstituted according to manufacturers' instructions. Milk and milk-replacers should be reconstituted according to manufacturers instructions. Milk and milk-replacers should not be fed in excess of body temperature (39°C).
 - 3.7 Calves should be weaned off milk, milk replacer or colostrum on to rations providing all essential requirements, only when their ruminant digestive systems have developed sufficiently to enable them to maintain growth and well-being and not earlier than 6 weeks of age. Restricted rations of the 'white veal' type, i.e. iron-free diets which cause anaemia, are unacceptable.
 - 3.8 Where large numbers of calves are reared, they should be grouped by age and size to reduce competition for food and to allow closer observation and management.

