



Properly preparing calves for weaning is essential in setting them up for future success. If calves have not developed their rumen enough by the time milk is removed from their diet, a significant growth rate check will occur. As well as needing to catch up with growth these calves are at a higher risk of disease.

Weaning

- Should not be based on their age; calves weights should be compared to their expected mature weight, based on the live weight breeding value NOT on a present weight according to the calves breed
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- Calves should be more than 25kg above birth weight (weigh over 65kg)
- Calves should be at 30% of their expected mature weight by the age of 6 months
- Reduce calves down to once a day rather than completely stopping their milk feeds (to help reduce a check in growth rate). Stepping down to once a day can be done at varying times depending on your system. The basic principle is that the calves need to be able to drink about 3L in one feed without adverse affects such as nutritional scours occurring.
- Calves should only be weaned if they are eating 1-1.5 kg meal per day.
- Continue to provide meal after weaning. Meal helps supplement protein and energy to prevent a growth check. Meal can have as little as 16% protein as there will be enough protein in the grass. Most calf meal also contains a coccidiostat which will help prevent coccidiosis.



Top Tips!

Improve meal intake pre-weaning by introducing it as early as possible to the calves. Also, sprinkling sodium bentonite on the meal also helps get calves interested in it.

Every entry in this year's competition for your top calf rearing tips and pearls of wisdom will go into the draw to win this handy chilly bin packed with goodies. Message 027 5500 505 with your tip and the reference "Calfink" and be in to win!

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