



NUTRITION NOTES

Innovation + Research from Kent Nutrition Group

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CALF TOOLKIT - A TOOL FOR ESTIMATING CALF PERFORMANCE AND COLD WEATHER FEEDING

The Calf Toolkit is a tool for evaluating dairy calf performance based on the National Research Council's Requirements (NRC 2001). Using those requirements for energy and protein, the Calf Toolkit estimates the potential performance of the calf based on feeding amounts of milk replacer and calf starter, calf starting body weight, feeding period (1-63 days), and environmental temperature. The performance evaluation is an estimate based on the NRC suggested requirements and is not a guarantee. Performance can also be affected by animal health, feeding methods, environment, and management factors.

The Calf Toolkit program is an excellent tool to evaluate the additional energy requirements of the young calf during cold weather. In cold weather, calves need more energy for body maintenance depending on their age and their environment. The first 3 weeks of life is a very critical time as the maintenance requirement increases about 10% for each 10°F drop in temperature below 60°F. The Kent Nutrition Group Calf Toolkit allows an evaluation of the nutrient needs (protein and especially energy) of the calf as the environmental temperature drops below 60°F.

Kent offers a line of milk replacers and starters to meet the needs of the calf in all weather conditions. Two products specifically formulated for winter feeding are; Milk Formula Winterizer and Milk Energizer 7/60. Milk Formula Winterizer was formulated to supply more protein (22%) and energy (24% fat) during cold weather. Another alternative is to feed Milk Formula 1 (or another Kent milk replacer) in combination with 2-4 ounces per calf per day of Milk Energizer 7/60 (60% fat). Utilizing the Calf Toolkit a specific feeding recommendation can be made for current weather conditions. Another alternative for cold weather feeding is to offer a third feeding of milk replacer to supply necessary energy and nutrients.

The Calf Toolkit is an excellent tool for estimating dairy calf performance:

- In all weather conditions
- With different Kent Milk Formulas and starters
- In conventional feeding programs (4 qts milk replacer/day)
- In intensive feeding programs (more than 4 qts milk replacer/day; with Velocity Milk Formulas)

The parameter ranges that can be evaluated with the Calf Toolkit include:

- Starting body weights ranging from 60-110 lb
- Feeding periods of 1-9 weeks (1-63 days)
- Environmental temperatures of 60°F to -20°F
- Different feeding amounts of Kent Milk Formulas and starters

Data that can be generated in tables and graphs and printed:

- Body weight gains
- Average daily gains
- Amount milk replacer fed
- Amount starter fed
- Total amount feeds fed (as fed and dry matter basis)
- Feed efficiency (lb gain/lb dry matter fed)

The data can be displayed on a computer as well as printed to a pdf format to use for sales presentations or keep for customer records. The Kent Calf Toolkit is an excellent sales tool. Use it to its full potential.

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