



JOURNAL OF AGRICULTURE

Vol. 63. No. 2.

August 15, 1941.

Wellington.

Published by
direction of
Hon. J. G. Barclay,
Minister of
Agriculture.

With the change-over from butter to cheese production, the question of using whey in the place of skim-milk for the raising of calves on the dairy farm is of considerable importance. Farmers who have been supplying cheese factories in past

REARING CALVES ON WHEY

seasons will be fully conversant with the use of whey in calf feeding, but to those who are changing over this season and who have formerly been accustomed to the use of skim-milk, the following notes will be of interest.

THERE is a general tendency to look upon whey with disfavour, but this need not be so if a little extra care is exercised in using it. Both skim-milk and whey are described as bulky or watery concentrates, in that the dry-matter content per gallon is low. The proteins and mineral-matter contained in each are of high feeding value so far as the rearing of young stock is concerned. On a general basis, it is considered that whey possesses more than half the feeding value of skim-milk. If a suitable dry concentrate is added to the whey ration the feeding value of the latter may be brought up to equal that of skim-milk. This is the practice generally followed, and is one to be recommended. Any attempt to make up any deficiency in whey through the provision of excess quantities is definitely harmful in the case of young animals. Indigestion, scours, bloating, distended abdomen, and pot-bellies are frequently seen when calves are fed excessive quantities.

Contributed by the
LIVESTOCK DIVISION

Start of Feeding

The same general principles of feeding apply to calves being reared on whey, and it is even more important in this case that all new-born calves should be given the first milk, or colostrum. This first secretion is unsuitable for the factory, and supplies a very real need for the calf at birth. The colostrum milk is laxative and protective in its action on the alimentary canal of the young calf. It initiates and stimulates the digestive processes, and removes the solid matter in the bowel at birth. Calves which are given the colostrum milk are much less susceptible to infection by harmful bacteria causing scours.

Once this object has been achieved, either by leaving the calf to suckle

the dam for a day or two or by milking out the cow and feeding the first milk to the calf in a bucket, the calf is carried on a ration of whole-milk for a number of days. This time varies on many farms, but it is important to give whole-milk for at least two weeks. The change-over to whey may be brought about in the third or fourth week when the whole-milk is being gradually replaced by the whey. The change-over should take at least 10 days, substituting whey for whole-milk at the rate of 1 lb. per day. One of the most commonly used supplements to bring up the feeding value of whey is meat-meal. As the whey replaces the whole-milk a small ration of meat-meal is gradually added.

Amounts Fed

The following table sets out clearly the amounts of whole-milk, whey, and meat-meal fed to calves at different ages. As already stated, however, a few extra days on whole-milk in the case of whey-reared calves will ensure a firm foundation on which to build.