

Care of Livestock during August

Contributed by the Animal Research Division

CALVES should be fed their mothers' milk for the first 3 days. This is important, as the first milk, known as colostrum or "beastings", contains substances which increase a calf's resistance to scours. Since over-feeding is an important cause of this trouble, not more than 6 pints daily should be fed during the first week, 7 pints during the second week, and 8 pints during the third week. Diluting the milk ration with a quarter of its volume of water will also reduce the incidence of scours. If scours occur, a supply of a sulphur drug should be obtained from a Veterinarian immediately, as the drug is very effective when used promptly. Calves should not be kept in a calf paddock. When 2 to 3 weeks of age they should be rotationally grazed ahead of the cows. Alternatively, rotate the calves through a minimum of 5 cow paddocks, in which they should spend not more than 5 days at a time in any one paddock. Where good pasture is available calves can be weaned quite satisfactorily at 8 weeks. If whole milk is fed, there is no need to give more than 7 pints per day.

CALF REARING

Cows about to calve should be brought into a handy paddock so that they can be kept under supervision. If a cow has difficulty in calving, veterinary assistance should be sought as soon as it is obvious that the presentation is not normal and in any case within 6 hours of the start of labour. Unskilled interference exhausts the cow and makes the Veterinarian's task more difficult or even impossible. Veterinary assistance should also be sought if the cow does not clean within 48 hours. Do not hang weights on the afterbirth.

Autumn-saved pasture is the best food for newly calved cows, but it must be grazed in small breaks which the cows will clean up in about 2 hours. The cows should continue to receive as much silage as they will eat and if the pasture is short and sappy, they should also receive hay.

The full sisters of high-producing heifers should always be kept, as should the daughters of Merit Sires with a high progeny test. Providing they are sturdy, the calves of very old cows with good life-time performances should always be kept, and there is no reason why the calves of well-bred heifers should not be kept. Twin heifers are seldom worth keeping and the twin of a bull calf should never be kept.

About 10 per cent. of all lambs are either born dead or die during the first week. These losses can be reduced by careful shepherding. Many lambs and some ewes can be saved by skilled assistance during lambing. Always use a reliable lubricating antiseptic on hands and wrists. Faulty presentations must be corrected.

A lamb should never be forcibly pulled away when a leg or the head is turned back. A number of lambs die from suffocation through the cleanings remaining over their nostrils. These are very easily removed. Where necessary lambs should be assisted to get a drink. This is particularly important where ewes have very large teats. Drawing away a few squirts from these will reduce their size and enable the new-born lambs to suckle. Ewes with very large teats, very small teats, badly placed teats, or defective udders should be marked for culling. A big percentage of their lambs will die. Many lambs which die during cold or wet weather would survive if they got a good drink soon after birth.

CARE OF LAMBING EWES

FEEDING AFTER CALVING

SELECTION OF CALVES FOR REPLACEMENTS

Milk from each quarter should be examined with a strip cup before milking. If it shows any abnormality or if the udder appears inflamed, treatment with penicillin should be started at once. Three tubes should always be injected at 24-hour intervals, even if the milk appears normal after the first tube. Prompt treatment early in lactation will often save a quarter which otherwise might become weak or even blind.

If difficulty was experienced in getting cows in calf last summer, now is the time to seek veterinary advice to prevent similar trouble this year. Control of trichomoniasis depends on using only clean bulls and not mating cows for several months after calving. It is, therefore, too late to do anything if action is deferred until the mating season starts.

Calves and yearlings may become very lousy during late winter and early spring. Control can be effected by the use of suitable dips, sprays, or washes, of which those containing D.D.T. or "Gammexane" are most effective. Repeated treatments may be necessary, as the eggs are difficult to destroy.

Red worms reduce the efficiency of farm horses. Drenching with phenothiazine now will prevent the pastures becoming contaminated with eggs and thus reduce the chances of reinfestation in spring. As phenothiazine causes very severe reactions in some horses, dosing should be done under veterinary supervision wherever possible. If this cannot be arranged, divide the dose recommended on the package into 5 parts and give it over 5 days.

Navel disease is contracted in the incubator, which should be scrupulously cleaned and fumigated with formalin between batches of chicks. Pullorum disease can only be controlled by repeated blood testing of all stock, immediate disposal of all reactors, and thorough cleaning and disinfection of premises after each test.

Dairy Produce Graded for Export

THE following figures showing quantities of dairy produce graded for export during May and for the 10 months ended 31 May 1953, with comparative figures for the same month and 10-monthly period of 1951-52, have been compiled by the Dairy Division of the Department of Agriculture from figures supplied by divisional officers at the various grading ports:—

Period	BUTTER		Total	Percentage inc. or dec.
	Creamery	Tons Whey		
May 1953	3,945	157	4,102	—
May 1952	3,248	107	3,355	—
Increase or decrease ..	+697	+50	+747	+22.265
10 months ended 31/5/53	159,267	3,120	162,387	—
10 months ended 31/5/52	154,468	2,636	157,104	—
Increase or decrease ..	+4,799	+484	+5,283	+3.362
Butter in store at 31 May 1953 was	15,597 tons			

Period	CHEESE		Total	Percentage inc. or dec.
	White	Tons Coloured		
May 1953	5,536	—	5,536	—
May 1952	4,404	3	4,407	—
Increase or decrease ..	+1,132	-3	+1,129	+25.618
10 months ended 31/5/53	101,482	140	101,622	—
10 months ended 31/5/52	89,902	751	90,653	—
Increase or decrease ..	+11,580	-611	+10,969	+12.099
Cheese in store at 31 May 1953 was	19,556 tons			

If these figures are converted into butterfat equivalent, there is an increase of 5.185 per cent. in butterfat graded for the 10 months as compared with the corresponding period of the preceding season. The above figures refer only to butter and cheese graded for export, and owing to diversions which may take place from time to time, they are not necessarily a true indication of production trends.