

Five kg weight boost for calves reared on Shine Once-A-Day

Calves reared on a once-a-day-milk replacer for six weeks have achieved weight gains of up 5kg higher than a group fed twice daily.

John and Edward Davies, who rear 140 black and white bull calves in Pembrokeshire, conducted their own experiment when they were first introduced to Shine Once-A-Day milk. They split a group of bull calves of a similar age into two groups with each group fed 500g of milk replacer. One group had Shine Once-A-Day and the other a twice daily formula.

"We did this over a six week period. It seemed to us that the Shine group wasn't eating the same level of cake as the other group so we were convinced that they would be lighter," says John.

But in fact the weigh-in revealed that this group was heavier by between 2-5kg. This result convinced the Davies' to switch the whole herd to Shine Once-A-Day.

The brothers, who farm in partnership with their mother, Beryl, at Cilrhue, near Crymych, buy bull calves from Pembrokeshire dairy producer, Kim Petty. They aim to sell the calves as stores but TB restrictions on their farm have forced a change to fattening the calves for slaughter.

Both John and Edward have part-time jobs off-farm therefore feeding the calves just once daily ideally suits their circumstances. "It saves a lot of time and that labour saving is hugely valuable to us," says Edward, who splits his off-farm work between another farm and a plant hire business while John works with dairy supply business, Kiwi Kit.

The calves arrive on the farm when they are between seven and ten days old. At this stage they have been fed colostrum and yoghurtised milk. They are immediately put on a diet of Shine Once-A-Day milk replacer. They are reared in pens of 12 and get the product from a simple 12-compartment feeder to enable every calf to get an equal in take. "When we first started using this system we couldn't believe the difference in the speeds the calves were drinking,"

says Edward. "Because we feed once a day we can take the time to watch them so as a calf finishes drinking we pour water into the empty compartment so it doesn't steal milk from the others." As a consequence, they no longer have under-performing calves. The calves each receive two litres of Shine Once-A-Day until weaning. "It's easy to mix and working out the volumes needed is straightforward. We are very pleased with the results we have achieved since using Shine Once-A-Day and we will continue to use it," says John.



Edward Davies says calves reared on Shine Once-A-Day out-performed a group fed twice daily.

For more information visit the Bonanza CalfNutrition website www.bonanzacalf.ie or ring Joe Murphy on 07500 944581. You can also contact your local John Thompsons rep or store or phone 02890 351321