

# Shine Once a day improves calf rearing on renowned dairy farm

A family of champion Holstein breeders are weaning their heifer calves at least a week earlier after switching to a once-a-day milk powder formula.

The Seaton family runs the pedigree Styche herd at Kynsal Farm near Market Drayton, Shropshire.

The 200-cow herd, which has an annual yield of 10,000 litres, calves all the year round.

Newborn calves are given bagged colostrum at birth and colostrum for the first four days before moving on to Shine Once-A-Day milk replacement powder. Two litres is fed twice a day until day eight and at this point the afternoon feed is reduced to one litre. From then on the milk replacer is fed once a day, rising from 2.5 litres daily to 3.5 litres at weaning.

From day three fresh water, straw and cake is available to the calves at all times; they get a coarse ration for the first two weeks and a pellet feed from thereon. Hannah Slack, the calf rearer at Kynsal Farm, says the formula encourages calves to eat more and, as a consequence, their daily liveweight gains increase.

"The calves are ready to be weaned at least a week earlier than they were on the previous system," Hannah explains. "We are weaning at eight weeks and the calves look brilliant. Shine gives them a fantastic start and a good start in life is everything."

Calves were previously fed a milk formula twice a day but they weren't thriving. "They weren't gaining the weights they should have been at weaning," Hannah recalls. "Since we switched to Shine their intake of feed and water has been phenomenal. They are putting on weight in the right places, they are bigger, better calves."

The calves immediately took to Shine, she adds. "They are very keen straight away, we never have any trouble getting them onto it."

And they are very settled too. "I didn't



**Above:** Selina Field (calf specialist Witter Farm Supplies) and Hannah Slack (Calf Rearer).

**Left:** Ed Seaton and Joe Murphy (Bonanza Calf Nutrition)

believe that it could work, feeding them once a day, but they are really settled. I would have expected them to be bawling for food by the afternoon but that just doesn't happen. I wouldn't have any hesitation in recommending Shine Once-a-Day," says Hannah.



Once the calves are weaned they are moved from individual pens to a group pen where they are reared on a diet of corn and straw.

The Seaton family take pride in their herd and have had many achievements in the show ring. In 2009, Styche Lyster Sally was reserve champion at the National Holstein Show and she also won the senior cow in milk class at the Dairy and Livestock Event. Previous show successes include honourable mention Holstein at the 2005 All-Breed All-Britain Calf Show and inter-breed heifer at the 2007 Royal Welsh.

Ed Seaton said getting the calf rearing right was the most important job on the farm; if this stage isn't done correctly it has a negative impact on profits further down the line. "There is no post-weaning stress,

Shine is simple and it works," he said. "For us, calving our heifers at two years old is critical to maximise the highest number of lactation possible. We need to make sure they get the best possible start."

According to Joe Murphy of Bonanza Calf Nutrition the ingredients used in Shine Once-a-Day take up to 14 hours to be digested where as the calf has only 3-4 hours to digest the ingredients used in practically all other milk replacers. The types and levels of fat used in Shine Once-a-day are also different and they promote dry feed intake and appetite, he added.

**You can find out more on [www.bonanzacalf.ie](http://www.bonanzacalf.ie) or by phoning Stuart Fry on 07917 210737, Joe Murphy on 07500 944581 or on free phone 0808 1781017**



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