



Calf performance exceeds expectations thanks to Compumate

Calves on a Pembrokeshire farm are out-performing expectations after the farmer switched to a new powdered milk and colostrum combination. Melbourne Phillips runs a herd of 150 spring calving British Friesian and Shorthorn cows at Blacknuck Farm, Maenclochog.

The herd calves between January and April and for the first two days of life calves remain with their mothers to maximise colostrum intakes. For the next seven days they are reared on colostrum in groups in an open shed before progressing to a mixture of colostrum and Compumate via by a computerised feeder. After three weeks the calves are reared on Compumate and coarse mix.

It is the second year Mr. Phillips has used this system. Although he has had computerised feeding in place for 20 years he previously used a skimmed milk-based product. "We have had

some excellent results, far better than I had expected," says Mr Phillips. "The calves' coats are shiny, they look really healthy animals. As a farmer I know it is important to get their diet right otherwise they won't grow. This system works for me. It is simple and I don't have any problems getting the calves to take the milk."

The difference between Compumate and other milk replacers, according to Tom Warren of Bonanza Calf Nutrition, is that it is designed specifically for use through computerised or automatic feeders. Highlighting the reason for the development of Compumate Mr. Warren stated that "calves in large groups, especially if varying in age, are ideal candidates for disease and drinking from the one teat is another risk factor. On many units the calves are located near adult or older animals which can be a huge source of infection".

He went on to outline the secrets behind Compumate. Firstly, "it is made with a range of milk ingredients including concentrated milk protein that contains high levels of anti bacterial

Compumate is delivering results in the calf rearing system at Blacknuck Farm. Melbourne Phillips (above), pictured with Shine sales representative, John Evans, says his calves are out-performing expectations.

and anti viral agents. Low heat-treated skim milk powder and buttermilk that have been selected using a curd or clotting index are also included. We use a natural sweetener along with four vegetable oils and butter lecithin that together have been shown to improve calf growth, shine and dry feed intake, he added".

Hygiene in the calf rearing sheds is another area Mr. Phillips never overlooks. He cleans out the calf sheds twice a week abiding by a policy of never putting clean straw onto a dirty bed.

John Evans, who supplies Mr. Phillips with Compumate, says attention to detail in this calf rearing system is delivering results. "Some farmers might cut back on feeding calves from day three or four but it is false economy. The first three weeks of life are the most important of all," says Mr. Evans.



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