



BONANZA CALF NUTRITION NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN CALVING ON SHINE ONCE-A-DAY

Viv Orchard and his son Rob run a high yielding, 170 cow Holstein herd with a strict Autumn calving pattern.



Viv Orchard's calf shed prior to feeding Shine Once-a-Day

Originally a computerised machine was used to rear the calves, the building like so many others on farms was not really designed for calves, it's quite hemmed into the middle of a group of buildings which hold older stock and has limited air flow. Viv found

that when a problem (usually cryptosporidium) occurred it spread through the entire group of calves, losing some and setting the others back severely. They asked Stuart Fry from Bonanza Calf to become involved after trying different machine settings and powders with limited results, the decision was made to change the system.



Viv's young calves introduced to Shine Once-a-Day

The computerised machine was removed and the shed filled with 54 individual pens, the SHINE SYSTEM of feeding was introduced.

Each Calf was given 4 litres of tested Johnnes free colostrum at birth, followed by 3 days of mothers milk (if Johnnes free) and were then introduced to SHINE

ONCE A DAY powder. Calves are fed twice a day and receive 0.7kg of milk powder per day with meal and water always available



Weaned calves

Rob deals with the newborn calf and then hands them over to Viv to rear. The majority of the feeding is done in the morning, which allows time for Viv to deal with Colostrum calves and any 'suspect' calves on his evening rounds. In the Autumn of 2015, 167 cows calved, 164 calves entered the calf rearing shed, 163 calves were weaned! "I was happy to watch this batch of heifers being prepared for bulling in the autumn of 2016. They weighed 370kgs by weigh tape at an average of 14 months old" said Stuart Fry of Bonanza Calf Nutrition. This equates to almost 0.8kg a day from birth. Shine Once-a-day encourages calves to eat more dry feed before weaning, increasing rumen development and growth after weaning, Stuart added.



Bulling Heifers

Viv and Rob buy powder through Nick & Wendy Furse at TAMAR MILLING.

A combination of superb stockmanship, good application of colostrum protocol and a bit of back up from Tamar Milling and Bonanza Calf Nutrition has achieved fantastic results, which Viv says he intends to better this year!

SHINE BRINGS PRACTICAL BENEFITS TO COMPACT CALVING SYSTEM

Practical constraints which had prevented a dairy farmer from rearing milk-fed calves at an off-lying site have been overcome with the introduction of Shine Once-a-Day milk replacer.

Conor Molony has nearly doubled his herd to 160 cows and, with two-thirds of those calving in just five weeks, it is a challenge to house all the calves.

He has housing on off-lying land but carrying milk to that site twice a day wasn't feasible.

Conor switched to Shine Once-a-Day after milk quotas were abolished but it also means that he can now move the calves to the outside block while they are still on a milk diet, freeing up housing on the home farm. "I like the versatility it allows" he says.

And the product is easy to mix. "One of the best things about Shine is that it is very easy to mix and the calves love it," says Conor.

He runs the spring calving herd of Holstein Friesians and New Zealand Friesian crossbreds on a grass-based system and supplies the milk to Centenary Thurles Co-op.

There is a strict AI breeding regime on the farm which results in very compact calving.

The target heifer replacement rate is approximately 18%. Bull calves and all calves born after the first five weeks are sold at approximately three weeks of age.

All calves are bottle-fed between three and four litres of colostrum as soon as possible after they are born.

Thereafter, calves are fed three litres of transition milk both in the morning and evening, for between two and three weeks, and are then introduced to milk replacer.

Each calf is fed 700g of milk powder daily and all calves have constant access to fresh water, straw and ad-lib concentrates, beginning with a calf muesli. A week prior to weaning, calves are gradually introduced to a 17% crude protein nut.

Calves begin life in pens of two or three. Once they are progressing, they are moved into groups of eight and fed on a ten-teat feeder before moving onto 20-teat feeders.

Calves are very close in age and are grouped according to size and strength. "Only calves that are good drinkers are moved to bigger groups," says Conor.

After weaning, calves are turned out to grass and fed 0.5 kg of nuts throughout the summer. From mid-November, when grass quality declines, they are moved onto a 21% crude protein heifer nut at a daily rate of 1.5 kg per head.

Shine is also contributing to calves exceeding their target weights. Before housing, at the end of November, calves were weighed and most were ahead of target. The average weights for all 51 calves was 242kg.

As there is still some grazing available, 26 calves were left at grass while the remaining 25 calves were housed and fed grass silage.



Dr Christine Cummins (Bonanza calf Nutrition) Conor Moloney

CALVES THRIVE ON THE CONSISTENT PERFORMANCE OF SHINE ONCE-A-DAY

Calf rearing at a North Tipperary dairy farm has been transformed by introducing a system of feeding milk replacer once a day.

Jerry Moloney, who runs a herd of 98 pedigree Holsteins at Nenagh, Co Tipperary, first used Shine Once-A-Day to reduce time and labour in feeding his heifer replacements.

Jerry achieved both but found many other benefits too. Cases of scour, which calves had experienced when they were fed whole milk, have been eliminated. Jerry puts this down to feed consistency among other reasons. "Calves thrive on consistency," he insists.

Calves also eat more straw and concentrates on the once-a-day feeding system; by weaning at 8–10 weeks they are consuming up to 2kg of concentrates daily.

Newborn calves are bottle-fed four litres of colostrum as soon as possible. For the first five days they receive three litres of transition milk before Shine is introduced, twice daily at this point, at 600g/day, rising to 750g/day over the course of a week.

To eat, calves constantly have access to fresh straw and an 18% blend or coarse ration and plenty of fresh water.

Feeding isn't the only component of the rearing system that protects calf health at Jerry's farm.

Small groups and hygienic pens play a big part in maintaining a high health status; no more than 10 calves are ever housed in a single pen. Initially, they are in groups of three and move into groups of six to 10 in the first week. All pens are straw-bedded and kept dry between weekly clean-outs.

Calves are weaned by gradually reducing over 7-10 days the volume of milk replacer fed. At this stage calves weigh 100kg and are thriving, says Jerry.

Calves are not turned out before weaning because Jerry says they perform better indoors; calving gets underway on February 1st and calves are turned out to grass in early April.

Once outdoors, calves are fed after-grass in a 'leader-follower' rotational system with heifers until early June. Paddocks are changed every five to seven days. Until early June, 1.5kg of 18% blend is fed.

Heifers are housed on December 1st with a continuation of the 1.5kg blend for one month, together with baled silage. Jerry's

motto is 'fit not fat' so, after a month, heifers receive grass silage only, until they go into the parlour in the first week of February the following year.

He has a strict vaccination and worming programme to combat the threat of worms and coccidial diseases; calves are also given a mineral bolus to ensure they have a sufficient level of trace elements.

Jerry's system is predominantly grass-based and he is achieving excellent results. By the end of this milk year, the combined average milk yield average for cows and heifers will be 7,200 litres at 550 kg solids on grass and 1,200 kg of concentrates.

There is a rigid 12-week breeding season for cows, and seven weeks for heifers. Any cows that fail to conceive in this period are moved on.

Heifers consistently calve at 23–24 months. In 2016, the empty rate of both heifers and cows inclusive was 6%.

Jerry believes that if a dairy farmer can get the first six months right, they will hit targets and calve heifers down at the right age.

"With Shine Once-A-Day this is possible for all heifers because they are hitting their target weights," says Jerry. "This year, the calves weighed an average of 220kg in the September weighing. Shine Once-A-Day has really transformed calf rearing."



Dr Christine Cummins (Bonanza calf Nutrition) and Jerry Moloney

HEIFERS REARED ON SHINE EXCEED BREEDING WEIGHT TARGETS BY 40KG

A dairy farming partnership is on target to tighten the calving pattern in its High EBI Holstein herd to two seasonal blocks thanks to a once-a-day approach to feeding calves milk replacer.

The Moore brothers, winners of the large herd section in the North Eastern Holstein Breeders Herds competition in 2015 run the Fowlerstown Holstein herd at Stamullen, County Meath, Ireland.

Cows had been calving for 11 months of the year but the business is switching to calving in two distinct blocks – five weeks in the autumn and nine in the spring.

Making that change has been helped by feeding calves Shine Once-a-Day milk replacer. All heifers are 40kg heavier at breeding and average 585kg at 23 months.

“With the extra weight gain the heifers can be brought back to calve earlier rather than holding them longer to fit into the following season,” explains David Moore.

Heifers calving this autumn are the first of the calves fed Shine Once-A-Day and are all calving down at 21-23 months of age, a first for the herd.

“Before Shine we would be holding onto heifers to get them bigger but now we can bring them back to calving earlier, saving money and making it easier to tighten calving into two set blocks,” says David.

It is not only this first group of heifers that has exceeded expectations; it is a pattern being followed by the subsequent batches. “All calves have been consistently surpassing their target liveweight gain of 0.7kg/day and we have no issues with sickness,” says David.

All heifers are on target for breeding and the next batch of in-calf spring block heifers are set calve at 21–23 months.

In addition to the increased weight gain and earlier age at calving, David says heifers are milking better too. The first of the heifers were milking an average of 30 litres in the weeks immediately after calving.

And there is up to 50 minutes of labour savings daily. “I can spend more time with the kids which is worth everything,” says David.

The Fowlerstown herd has been run as a tight ship for many years. The only change to the heifer rearing routine is feeding the calves Shine Once-a-Day milk replacer.

The first six feeds each calf receives are from its own dam. Any high somatic cell count (SCC) is discarded to prevent potential transmission of diseases to calves.

No concentrates are fed during the summer because calves thrive and are ahead of target.

A strict strip grazing regime is adhered to; calves receive fresh grass daily and graze until mid-November.

Calves are weighed every six weeks and weaned when they average 100kg. January and February 2016-born calves weighed in at an average of 285kg in October and the March/April calves were an average of 240kg, all of which are on target to be served in April.

All heifers are genotyped and the herd is among the top 1% for EBI, with an exceptional solids output averaging 600kg a year.

Since introducing Shine Once-A-Day into their system, the Moore brothers say they have not looked back. “We could see a visible improvement in the calves and this improvement has carried through to all batches of calves, both in their health and weight gains. It has surpassed all expectations,” says David.



Dr Christine Cummins Bonanza Calf Nutrition, Robbie Moore, David Moore, John Moore (left to right)