

# **Calf & Heifer Congress 2016 – Virtual Tour**

## **Breezy Hill Dairy – The Almeter Family**

### **“Timing and Logistics Are Everything”**

#### **LOCATION: SHELDON, NY in WYOMING COUNTY**

- 1000 adult , 880 milking
- 480 calves started every year, about 40 calves per month
- Daily inventory of 95 wet/just weaned calves
- Housing system:
  - 2-row, side-curtained, N to S oriented barn with overhead fans; 95 individual wire panel pens for ~65 days built in 2008
  - Super hutches used for bull calves
  - Weaned/pack barn: calves 2 - 4 months old, 10 pens of 9 calves each across road
  - Free stall heifer barn: 4 months to breeding age next to weaned barn
- Stopped sending weaned calves to custom grower in 2015 with completion of weaned and grower barns
- Plans to improve rest of heifer barns with time

#### **NEWBORN PROTOCOLS**

- Cows calve on mattress covered freshening area with a light covering of sawdust that is cleaned frequently
- Calving area close to milk house and calf barn
- All heifer calves receive back tag with birth date, time, dam and colostrum quality score (1-3) before moving to calf barn
- Newborns within 15-30 minutes of birth placed in plastic water tub on wheels and left for short time for cow to lick while colostrum is thawed/warmed in water bath warmer
- Calves moved to adjacent area adjacent to calving pen with heat lamps and nearby room with hot water, iodine, tags, calving supplies and dry towels
- Calves have navels dipped in iodine and fed colostrum while in plastic tubs within 1 hour of birth
- Calves wheeled to calf barn as soon as dry prior to next milk feeding
- Jackets put on in cold when placed in individual pen

#### **COLOSTRUM MANAGEMENT**

- Colostrum harvest split between Immucell and farm use
- Cows milked within 4-5 hours of calving
- Colostrum milked into pails
- Colostrum poured into Perfect Udder bags and placed in a sink with cold water and ice bottles to chill
- Bags placed in refrigerator until 1X daily batch pasteurization
- All colostrum Brix refractometer tested before bags are pasteurized
- Refractometer is used to test most calves' serum protein levels as well
- Colostrum bags are taken out of the refrigerator and batch pasteurized 1X daily
- After pasteurization, bags are placed in an ice bottle bath again to chill before freezing or held in refrigerator
- Score 1 = >25% for heifers, Score 2 = 22-25% + colostrum supplement for heifers, Score 3 <22% for bulls only
- Bags were marked previously with stars for score now with notches (1, 2 or 3 of them)
- Majority of colostrum is frozen some retained in the fridge
- Commercial circulating warm water bath system used to thaw/warm colostrum
- 1 gallon of colostrum tubed within 1 hour of birth
- Next feeding is 2<sup>nd</sup> milking from fresh cows - harvested, poured into plastic bottles, cold water chilled and stored in the fridge

#### **FEEDING PROGRAM: MILK**

- Milk fed is mostly high SCC with some saleable milk as needed; solids not tested
- Milk is batch pasteurized in one of two units along with colostrum

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- Calves are bottle fed for 2-3 days before being bucket trained
- Calves are fed 3X daily on 8 hour intervals using a rolling tank with electric milk pump, hose with nozzle and a metering device (Feed-R-Feeder)
- Yellow tags on pen fronts indicate the feeding rate
- Feeding Rates – Daily Totals:
  - Day 1 - 7 6.0 qts
  - Day 8 - 14 7.8 qts
  - Day 14 - 21 9.6 qts
  - Day 22 - 28 10.2 qts
  - Day 29 - 35 11.4 qts
  - Day 36 – 42 11.4 qts
  - Day 43 – 49 11.4 qts
  - Day 50 – 56 3.9 qts
- Corid added daily in ramp milk ramp down week
- Calves are weaned at 56 days remaining in their pens for 7-10 days before moving
- Water is fed to all calves after milk 3X daily using milk delivery system
- Water is at a room temperature or above in cold weather

## FEEDING PROGRAM: GRAIN / HAY

- Grain is introduced at Day 3.
- Grain is a 22% starter pellet with steam flaked corn.
- Grain pails dumped 1X daily, contents fed to older calves
- At weaning calves are consuming 6-8# grain/day.
- Calves remain on starter grain for two weeks after being moved to the weaned barn
- A handful of hay is introduced after weaning.

## CLEANING / SANITIZING PROTOCOLS:

- Bottles and nipples washed and sanitized daily using CIP principles including acid rinse. #X weekly given a chlorine dioxide rinse as well
- All milk pails are washed and sanitized using CIP principles inclusive of acid rinse daily in the summer, 3X weekly in colder weather. A chlorine dioxide rinse is used year round.
- Milk taxi washed and sanitized daily in same manner, rinsed in between.
- Equipment is tested occasionally for bacteria load when problems arise.

## GROWTH / HEALTH STATISTICS:

- Rates of Gain at 8 weeks (weaning): 1.9-2.1#/day
- Rates of Gain at 4 months: 1.9 – 2.1#/day
- Pre-weaning mortality: 2.8%
- Post-weaning mortality: 1.8%
- Scour Rate (calves that need more than 1 electrolyte treatment): <3%
- Respiratory Infections post weaning : 10-15% depending on season