

# Calf & Heifer Congress 2016 – Virtual Tour

## Woodsway Farm – Custom Calf Raisers

**Owners/Operators:** Jim & Sally Woods and family

**Location:** Bennington, NY in Wyoming County

- Custom calf raisers since 2004
- Single source – Baker Brook Dairy, Attica, NY (1700 milking cows, 1500 replacements)
- 750-800 calves started every year, about 60-65 calves per month
- Calves picked up at age Day 2; returned at age 4 months
- Daily inventory of 250-270 calves
- Housing system:
  - 140 hutches – calves in hutches for 8 weeks, newborn to post-weaning
  - Barn 1: calves 2-3 months old, transition barn, for 65 calves
  - Barn 2: calves 3-4 months old, for 65 calves
- Staff: owners/operators , 1 F/T, 3 P/T
- All heifer calves receive a temporary plastic neck chain with a tag number of 1 – 50 (which are cleaned and reused). At this point, a decision is made to raise or sell the calf, based on dam performance and appearance, and calf physical appearance and birthing history.
- Calves are picked up by Woodsway and transported to the calf facility.
- Permanent RFID tags are put in by Woodsway.

### **FEEDING PROGRAM: MILK**

- 1 gallon colostrum fed at birth, then 2 quarts for 1-2 more feedings, all done at source farm.
- Calves are fed electrolytes at first feeding at Woodsway Farm, then switched to 22/20 amino acid balanced milk replacer.
- Feeding Rates – Daily Totals:

	Summer	Winter
○ Day 2 - 7	4.6L	4.8L
○ Day 8 – 14	5.4L	5.8L
○ Day 14 – 40	6.2L	6.8L

  - Calves are weaned at 40 days, +/- 3 days, based on calf size.
  - Weaning process: solids are cut by 10-15% everyday while volume is increased to 4L per feeding, twice daily feeding. We take 7 days to wean off milk replacer, then 3 more days on just warm water (100-110 degree), and then transition to all cold water.
  - Calves are fed milk and water using an Urban Milk Shuttle on a custom-made trailer pulled by an ATV.
  - Water is fed to all hutch calves after milk, at a temp of 80-90 degrees, year round.

### **FEEDING PROGRAM: GRAIN / HAY**

- Grain is introduced at Day 8.
- Grain is pelleted 22% starter grain coated with molasses.

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- Grain is shaken up at every feeding, changed or added to as needed.
- At weaning, calves are consuming 4-6# grain / day.
- After weaning, calves are consuming 6-8# grain / day.
- Calves remain on starter grain about 10 weeks, and then switched gradually over a 2 week period to a 19% grower pellet.
- They are fed this grower pellet until they return to the source farm, at a feeding rate of 6-7# grain / day.
- Hay is introduced at 8 – 9 weeks. This hay is dry hay, 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> cut grass
- At 3 months, calves receive baleage (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup>), free choice, about 60-70% DM.
- We use a cart pull by an ATV, cart filled with clean grain pails, 3 totes of grain, and a pail to dump old (not dirty!) grain.

## HOUSING:

- Calf Hutches – 140 Calf Tel hutches
- Calf jackets are used during winter months on all milk calves.
- Barns (2) – group housing, bedding pack, 10 calves / pen, room for 130 calves, head locks in pens with older calves
  - Barn 1 – transition barn, 2-3 month-old calves
    - Pens 6/7 for calves coming in from hutches (9-10 in Pen 6, 4-6 in Pen 7).
    - Pens 1-5 for 10 calves each, calves moved up every week to next pen as they age / grow.
    - Circulating fans, 2 tube ventilation systems, 10 ft sidewalls, 4 ft solid wall with 4 ft curtains.
  - Barn 2 – 3-4 month old calves
    - 6 pens, bedded packs, head locks; room for 65 calves
    - 12 ft sidewalls with 4ft solid wall and 7 ft curtains.
    - Naturally ventilated with ventilators on roof peak.
- Currently experimenting with super hutches for transition calves, to help with transition, reduce crowding. Currently we are at 30-35 sq. ft. / calf, but would like to be at 40 sq. f.t / calf.

## VACCINATION PROGRAM:

- Day 1 – nasal respiratory vaccine, 1<sup>st</sup> defense bolus, and selenium supplement injection; navel is dipped 2x.
- Day 30 – clostridia / pinkeye vaccine.
- Day 50-60 – nasal respiratory vaccine 1 week before moving to transition barn; dewormed
- Day 85-95 – 1<sup>st</sup> 10-way respiratory vaccine
- Day 100-115 – 2<sup>nd</sup> 10-way respiratory booster
- Day 120 – nasal respiratory vaccine before move to source farm, dewormed, pinkeye implant

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## HEALTH PROTOCOLS:

- Scours – electrolytes and sulfa pills in place of milk for 1-2 feedings, then return to milk.
- Scours and Pneumonia treatment (NT) supplement added to all calves' milk, from Day 3 – Day 14 per label.
- Currently on Corid program for coccidia – 2 treatments: 1<sup>st</sup> at weaning for 5 days, then one week later in transition barn for 5 days.

## CLEANING / SANITIZING PROTOCOLS:

- Milk equipment – we use a 3-bay stainless steel restaurant sink for pre-wash, washing, and acid sanitize rinse for all feeding equipment.
- All milk pails are washed every feeding for the calves up to 2 weeks old. Older calves are washed as needed.
- All milk pails are changed out / replaced with new pails about 3x/year. Newest pails always go to the youngest calves. Older pails are used for older milk calves. Oldest pails are used for grain feeding in hutches.
- Equipment is tested occasionally for bacteria load by Attica Veterinary Clinic.
- Milk shuttle is washed and acid rinsed after every feeding.
- Hutch cleaning is done every week, taking about 1-1/2 hours (3 people) to pitch out hutch with skid steer and forks/shovels, another 1-1/2 hours (1 person) to wash hutches, and another 1 hour to take down and setup hutches (2 people).
- Hutches are cleaned when calves are moved to the barn, pressure washed with chlorinated soap and Clorox, at 170-180 degree water.
- Hutch site is 1 foot of gravel topped with 2-3" of #2 stone, then covered with felt landscape fabric under the hutches. Fabric is cleaned of manure then swept with power broom after the calf has been moved into the barn. The fabric is replaced once a year. The hutch area is re-stoned every 3 years.

## CHANGES WE HAVE MADE OVER THE YEARS:

- Milk Feeding: We started mixing 5 gallon pails at a time, hand scooping milk into the pails. Temperature monitoring was by "feel". Only two people fed milk to maintain some consistency. We now use an Urban Milk Shuttle, mounted on a custom-made trailer, which also carries clean pails and any other supplies we need to feed milk. This shuttle has made it possible for anyone to feed milk and maintain the consistency in temperature, feeding rate, and mixing that is so important to the calves and us.
- Feeding Hay in Hutches: When we get a large group of calves ready to move into the barn and not have the barn space, grain consumption will go up to 8-10#/day. Then we chop hay with our

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bale chopper (2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> cut grass) and feed in the hutches in a separate pail. There is less waste of hay and it is not eaten off the ground.

- Summer Hutch Bedding: In the late fall / winter, we start hutches with straw for the young calves (up to 2 weeks old), then we use sawdust. In the late spring / summer, we use all sawdust. In 2014 we started using bagged coarse sawdust. This drastically reduced respiratory problems from the dust. We also saw a reduction to lower jaw abscesses in newborn calves when they would eat the sawdust splinters.
- Temporary Neck Chains at Birth: This allows us to have a consecutive numbering system with permanent numbers. It makes it easier to locate calves, grouping calves for moving and vaccinating, and saved money by not skipping permanent tag numbers. It also eliminated ear tag infections and we have consistency in ear tag placement.
- Making baleage with 1<sup>st</sup> Cut: This allows us to get a higher quality hay for the calves. We can do 3-4 hay cuttings per year.

## **GROWTH / HEALTH STATISTICS: (10 year average)**

- Rates of Gain at 8 weeks (weaning): 1.7 - 1.8#/day
- Rates of Gain at 4 months: 1.9 – 2.1#/day
- Mortality: 2.1%
- Scour Rate (calves that need more than 1 electrolyte treatment): 4.5%
- Respiratory Infections(pneumonia) : 3.3%
- Hernias: 1.2%
- Navel Infections: 1.9%