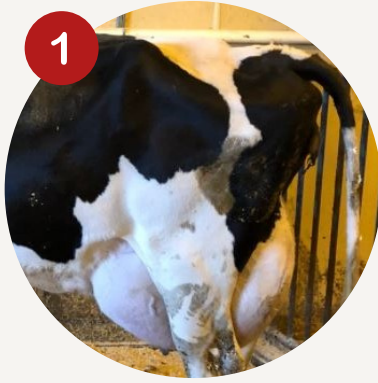


# DELIVERY: DETERMINING IF THE COW/HEIFER NEEDS YOUR HELP

## Stages of labor

1



### 1- Preparation: Cervix and birth canal begin to dilate

Common signs include restless behavior, isolation from the herd, raised tail head, swollen vulva, vocalization, full udder, and mucus discharge. Usually lasts 2-6 hours. Examine the cow/heifer if you do not notice any progression to stage 2 after 4 hours.

2



### 2- Delivery stage: Cervix fully dilated, and calf moves through the birth canal:

Starting with a fully dilated cervix, the appearance of the membranes (water bag), and abdominal contractions are evident. A few minutes later (~15-20 min) calf's leg become visible. (*Learn when to intervene on page 2*).

3



### 3- Expulsion of the fetal membranes stage:

Usually happens 8-12 hours post-calving, and if it takes longer than 24 hours, it is considered retained placenta. Risk factors are dystocia, twinning, induction, hypocalcemia (milk fever), and abnormally long or short pregnancies.



Source: <https://www.vet.cornell.edu/animal-health-diagnostic-center/programs/nyschap/modules-documents/CalvingAssistance> or scan QR code

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4 tips that dramatically affect the outcome of delivery

## 1 Observe

- The recommended frequency of observation is every 1 hour. Once a cow/heifer is in stage 2 of labor the frequency of observation should increase to every 30 minutes.



## 2 Knowing when to intervene

- The water sac has been visible for 2 hours, and you have not seen progression (the cow is not trying);
- If the cow has been trying for over 30 min and making no progress;
- Cow quit trying for more than 15-20 min after a period of progress (rest shouldn't last >5-10 min);
- Cow or the calf is showing signs of stress or fatigue (swollen tongue on the calf, yellow staining of the fetus, or severe bleeding from the rectum of the cow);
- If you suspect the calf has abnormal presentation, position, posture.



## 3 Determining if the calf can be delivered by forced extraction

- Once you have decided to intervene, you should palpate the calf and birth canal to determine if the calf is alive and 2) if it can be delivered through the birth canal.
- Know when to pull and when to quit
- Be sure to always correct malpositions before pulling. Talk to your veterinarian about the best ways to intervene.



## 4 Know when to call for professional assistance

- You cannot access the problem;
- You know what you are dealing but you do not know how to fix it;
- You have been trying to correct the problem for 30 minutes and have not made any progress.

