

Calving Tips

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Obstetrical Kit

- Bucket, warm water and disinfectant (chlorhexidine or povidone iodine)
- Lubricant
- OB chains and handles
- Tail tie
- Strong iodine
- Vitamin E/Selenium injections (R/X)
- Penicillin (long acting, R/X)
- Oxytocin (R/X)
- Clean towels
- Calf esophageal feeder
- OB sleeve gloves

Cows Prior to Calving

- Feed thin cows prior to calving to increase milk production.
- Give Vitamin E/Selenium injection (R/X) one month prior to calving if not on adequate supplementation. Test if unsure.
- Give Clostridial and Respiratory Virus vaccines (R/X) one month prior to calving.
- Deworm and defluke.

Cows in Labor

- Assist with the following if you can be clean and gentle, or get professional help:
 - Hard labor for 30 minutes to 1 hour without progress.
 - Any abnormal presentation. Time will not correct these. Normal presentation is a nose and two front feet at the vulva.
 - Unusual behavior, such as a cow that seems to start labor, but doesn't progress. This may be true breech, tangled twins, or early stages of "milk fever." Early intervention is vital to saving both calf and cow. As long as you are clean and gentle, the maxim "When in doubt, check it out" holds true.
- Handle cows gently and with as little stress as possible. The more stress, the more likely you will have problems with cow-calf bonding.
- Check the udders for adequate colostrum, the single most important factor in calf survival. Consult your veterinarian about supplementation for weak calves.
- After delivery, strip a few drops of colostrum from each teat to check for mastitis and make it easier for the calf to get its first mouthful. If the calf is weak, you may need to milk out and force-feed the calf.
- If you've worked on the cow for half an hour and have made no progress, you've probably reached the point of diminishing return. Call your veterinarian.

Calves at Birth

- Dip navel, using strong iodine.
- Give a Vitamin E/Selenium injection (R/X).
- Make sure the calf nurses multiple times and well in the first 8 hours of life.

Note: These procedures may not be right for all situations. Always consult [your veterinarian](#) with questions or if you feel you need assistance for any reason. Drugs marked (R/X) are prescription drugs that require an established doctor/patient/client relationship for dispensing and use.

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