

Proper housing facilities for calves (Part 2)

by Rykie Visser, export and regional manager: DeLaval

In the previous edition of Dairy Mail Africa, we looked at calf housing requirements, feeding facilities and the requirements for the utility area. Now we will take a closer look at the different types of housing for dairy calves. Each type of calf housing has its own advantages and disadvantages, related to climate or the management skills of the operator.

Young calves

Young calves, from birth to weaning age, are best kept in individual stalls to control:

- ▶ Suckling – bacteria can get into young heifers' udders and can cause problems later in life
- ▶ The spreading of disease – individual calves can be isolated from others if disease becomes a problem.

Where individual stalls are used, it should be easy to clean, move and expand. Stalls should be the right size for the calves they house. Stalls should also be arranged to facilitate easy feeding and cleaning. If individual stalls are not available and calves must be kept in group pens, they should be tied during, and for a short while after feeding.

Remember to provide shade at all times and try to move the pens as soon as wet spots become visible.

Although earth floors may be used, hard-surfaced floors are better, because it is easy to clean and less labour is needed. Sufficient dry bedding must be supplied in all stalls to absorb liquid waste and keep the calf's bed dry. Stalls vary in size between 1,5-2 m² per calf, the best being 1,8 m². Stalls that are adjacent to one another, must have solid partitions to prevent calves from suckling each other. The walls between pens should be at least one metre high. In cold areas at least three, but preferably all four, sides should be solid to prevent drafts.

Soiled bedding should be removed from the pens and fresh bedding added as often as necessary to maintain a clean, dry bed.



An example of individual calf pens

Weaned calves

Calves that have been kept in individual stalls are normally moved to group pens after weaning. Grouping can reduce the labour required to feed and keep calves clean. It usually also means reduced building costs. Grouping of calves should be based on size and age. As an example, calves between the ages of 3-6 months can be divided into groups of 8-10 animals per pen. Each calf in the group should have 2 m² of bedded space and 30-40 cm of feeding space.

If the pens or the bedded areas are too small or if there is not enough feeding space, the calves could come under severe stress that can contribute to digestive upsets and scours.

For more information on calf rearing equipment or any milking machine needs, phone Rykie Visser on 082 863 0364 or e-mail rykie.visser@delaval.com DMA

Calf pens (Part 2)



Young calves – birth to weaning age

- ▶ Keep calves apart to prevent them from suckling each other and spreading disease
- ▶ Provide shade and clean, dry bedding at all times
- ▶ Hard-surfaced floors are easy to clean
- ▶ Individual pens must have solid walls so as to prevent drafts
- ▶ Calves in group pens should be tied during and after feeding. Place dry feed in the bucket after feeding.

Weaned calves

Keep calves of the same size and age in group pens. **DMA**



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Nampak

tackles hygiene

by Karien Slabbert



Khayelitsha is an informal settlement in South Africa that plays witness to more than a hundred deaths a year due to diarrhoea in babies and small children, according to Dr Tony Westwood, clinical coordinator for Pediatrics and Child Health at the Western Cape Department of Health in South Africa.

Dedicated community workers in Khayelitsha have been assisting with a campaign to educate the community on ways to prevent and treat diarrhoea. A sugar and salt solution is being promoted as an effective home-remedy to counteract dehydration. It involves mixing a solution of eight teaspoons of sugar and half a teaspoon of salt to one litre of boiled, cooled water.

The remedy must be mixed accurately as too much salt can have ill effects. To promote the use of the correct recipe, a bottle labelled with the correct information has been developed.

Nampak Liquid donated 20 000 one litre bottles and caps. Quali Juice donated 20 000 informative bottle labels in three languages. The labels show the user how to mix and administer the sugar-salt-solution.

Terrence van der Walt, divisional marketing manager of Nampak Liquid, says: "This is our second year of involvement in this project. It is our sincere hope that by donating these bottles, we will facilitate the education of the community and ultimately save lives." **DMA**

SA's 1st Manitou MLT 735 for Hellberg Farms

The first Manitou of its kind in South Africa – an MLT 735 – has been purchased by the Hellberg Farms near Vryheid in KwaZulu-Natal. This new Maniscopic MLT model was recently launched as a more dynamic, more powerful and easier to handle range-topper of the French manufacturer's world-renowned materials-handling machines for, among other industries, agriculture.

The man at the helm of the combined dairy, timber, feedlot, dairy and cropping operation, Horst Hellberg, came across the MLT 735 at the recent AGRITECHNICA agricultural exhibition in Germany and immediately requested to be contacted by Manitou South Africa.

"Having experienced the machine's impressive manoeuvrability, rough terrain capability and economic operation first-hand, the only remaining factor that I had to evaluate was the local support for Manitou products in South Africa," Hellberg reports. "The speed with which they reacted to my inquiry and their willingness to go the extra mile by loaning me a machine in the meantime, quickly proved that the service and support levels are of international standard and I could order the machine without hesitation."

Hellberg Farms can be described as an ideal operation for the use of an MLT, as functions range from loading gravel in the quarry to loading and mixing feed, compaction of maize and soya silage, cleaning the feedlot, handling hay-bales, handling of bulk fertiliser bags and lifting construction workers and materials to previously unreachable heights during expansion and construction work, as well as repairs anywhere on the farm.

"In the face of the serious shortage of skilled labourers in the region, mechanisation has never made more sense than with a Manitou MLT that can carry out a variety of functions. It switches from one attachment to the other in a flash, all in a very fuel-efficient manner," says Hellberg. "Working the Manitou for 2 000 hours per annum, we expect to use less than 10 500 litres of fuel. Add to that the improved operator productivity that flows from



The new Manitou MLT 735 loading gravel in a quarry on Hellberg Farms

having full air-conditioning and a radio in the cabin of the 735, and the positive impact on the farm's daily workflow is really remarkable."

The MLT 735 incorporates a unique Manitou-designed joystick with Switch-and-Move technology. Direction of travel of the machine, controlling the boom, gears, moving the steering wheel – all these functions can now be controlled simultaneously for greater safety and operational speed. With the operator's left hand totally devoted to the steering wheel, all the other functions can be controlled by the joystick in his right hand. A built-in LSU (Load Sensing Ultra) system allows three simultaneous movements in under 11 seconds, while the MLT's autoclean-system lends itself particularly well to the farming world, as it prevents the cooling system from becoming clogged.

For more information, contact Lindsay Shankland, CEO of Manitou Southern Africa, on +2711 975 7770, fax +2711 975 4646 or e-mail lindsay@manitousa.co.za



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