

FINALLY...

It's been a long season but you will have a great friend in your calf at the end of it.

You can be very proud that you took on a big task, and completed it.

You've fed and trained your calf over a long period of time; you've learned a lot about yourself and self-discipline (making yourself go out and feed it when you would rather not), and you've gained a lot of satisfaction from forming a friendship with an animal which relied on you.

Don't forget to say thanks to Mum & Dad for their support and help, and the farmer who made it possible.

And remember, if the calf goes back to being a member of a herd of cattle, it will still remember you.

Many farmers can point out the Calf Club calves in their herds because they are often the quietest and friendliest.

And that's a nice thought, knowing you have trained such an animal.

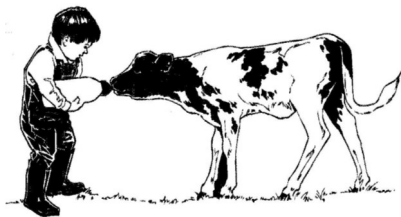
Congratulations.

You've done it.



Choosing a calf

Pick a good, strong four-day old calf that is not smaller than others with it, or born prematurely. Ask what breed your calf is and when it was born. Make a note of these details in your diary.



Feeding

1. For the best start a newly born calf must have its mother's first milk (colostrum). This milk is high in antibodies which fight infection.

A replacement is available from Farmlands or your vet. If you can, feed your calf colostrum for its first 10 days; you'll be giving it a very good start.

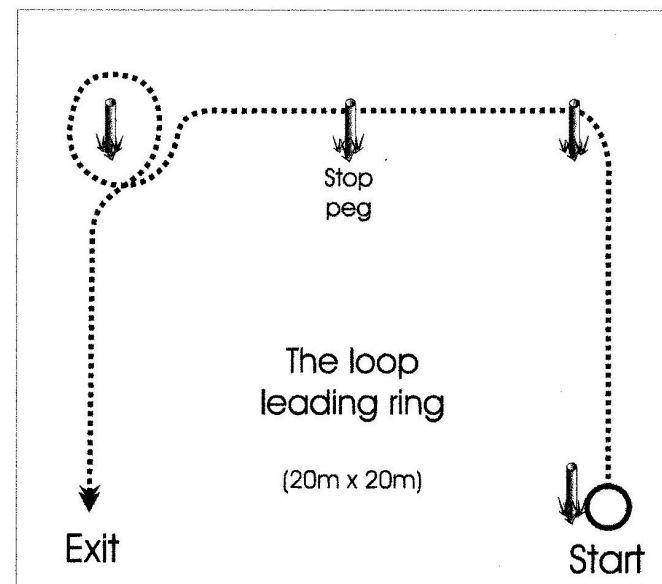
2. After four days feed two times a day for the first three to four weeks, following the instructions on the milk powder bag. 4 - 5 litres in total per day is usual.

3. You can supplement their diet with calf meal from the start, giving small quantities of fresh calf meal each day, so by 3-4 weeks old your calf is eating as much as it wants.

4. Continue feeding milk until the calf is able to eat sufficient meal and grass.

Usually it is necessary to provide two milk feeds a day up to the age of 8 weeks, and one feed until 12 weeks

5. Steer the calf by moving the hand that is holding the lead to the left or right. Make sure the lead from the rope/collar is not too tight or too loose.



AFTER CALF CLUB

The day is over, and you're home with your calf.

Remember to take care to put it back in its paddock for a good sleep, and put all your gear away.

Depending on how well your calf did at Calf Club, you might be talking to Mum and Dad about whether it should be entered in Group Day. If it is going to be in more events, you will need to continue feeding and training it.

Rearing

A calf is assessed at Calf Club day under the following headings; care, cleanliness and condition.

You may be asked what breed it is, when it was born and other things you do to take care of it.

There is a dairy class (e.g Jerseys, Friesians and Ayrshires) and a beef class (e.g. Herefords, Angus, dairy beef crosses).

Type

The judge will give their personal assessment on the conformation, size, shape and other characteristics that make the animal outstanding in its breed.

Leading

Daily practice can result in a perfect lead on Calf Club day.

1. Listen to the judge for instructions and ask questions if you're unsure.
2. Hold the rope so that your right hand (steering hand) is close to the collar, grasps the rope palm up, and your left hand (braking hand) grasps the rope palm down.
3. Lead the calf anticlockwise around the ring stopping at the stop peg and counting 1,2,3 before moving on.
4. Walk at the same pace as the calf; walk upright and keep to a straight line. The calf and child need to move in tandem with right/left legs in line.

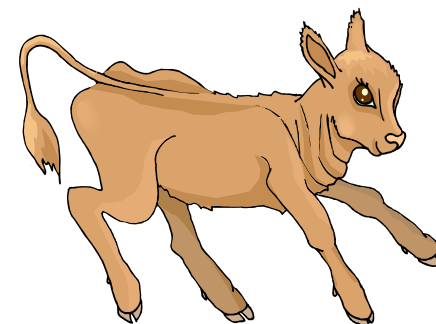
5. Keep your bottle, teat and mixing gear clean between feeds.

Dirty equipment cause scours.

6. Observe when your calf has had enough - the flanks become level with the sides. Never allow a bloated look. Your calf may seem to want more and more - but this is unkind and may kill it!

Daily Care

1. Brush daily and use a damp cloth to clean around its face, under the front legs, on each flank and inside the ears.
2. Check that the calf's shelter is clean.
3. Wash the feeding bottle and teat after every meal.
4. If you tether your calf, initially the tether needs to be short. Secure the tether well with a snap hook (at the calf end) to a secure stake which can be shifted from time to time.
5. If possible have your calf in a secure paddock so it can run free when not tethered.
6. Take the calf for a walk using a leading halter and lead with a snap hook on one end. Lead from the same side you will be on when in the ring see page 7.



Weekly care

1. Lengthen the tether as the calf gets used to it.
2. Loosen it's collar gradually as your calf grows.
3. Watch for scouring (diarrhoea). Treat with electrolytes from a vet without delay.
4. If you have a bull calf and want to make a steer out of it, have its testicles docked before it is 3 weeks old. Ask a local farmer or your vet.
5. If the calf limps or kneels down to eat it may have footrot, a bacterial disease. Obtain help to cut it out and contact a vet for treatment.
6. Drench for worms if necessary. Consult a vet for drench dose rates and required frequency. It is important to change the type of drench used so that resistance to the drench is not built up.
7. Check for lice and keds. Pour-on treatments are used to control these.



Keep a diary

Record your calf's birth-date, when you collected it, milestones, training and the feeding programme. A Calf Club diary will be available from school.



Preparing your calf for Calf Club day

Begin training the calf at an early age. Make some time each day to play with the calf and caress it.

Talk quietly to it when feeding and playing so it gets to know your voice.

From about 10 days old your calf can be tethered with a halter to get it used to it.

Practice leading your calf in its paddock, always making sure you are on the left side of the calf. It helps to have someone walking behind your calf when you are starting out.

Practice your leading in all conditions - rain, wind. You want to get your calf used to strange noises.

Calves should be brushed (a nail brush is fine) to remove old stray hairs, then washed and shampooed with a mild soap seven days before Calf Club day.