

Calf Care

Work Sheet

The table includes information for some of the calves at this dairy operation. This farm currently has an average for first calving around 32 months. The farm's management team wants to drop that age to 24 months of age. Remember, the heifers ideally need to be at least 65% mature body weight to breed.

You are going to calculate to see if their heifer calves are gaining ideal weight for their new program.

Steps:

1. Calculate the preweaning weight gain
2. Calculate the average daily gain
3. Evaluate the average daily gain.
 - a. Is the average daily gain acceptable?
 - b. It is on track for the new breeding program?
 - c. Why or Why not
4. How can this farm improve its calving age?

Calf ID	Birth Weight (lbs)	Weaning Weight (lbs)	Age at Weaning (days)	Number of Disease Events	Preweaning Weight Gain	Average Daily Gain
20	97	166	74	4		
21	95	164	69	1		
22	98	170	60	0		
23	105	180	60	0		

Knowledge Nook:

1. Look at the number of disease events
 - a. How often a calf is sick?
 - b. If a calf is healthy she is gaining more weight? - yes, because they want to eat. Usually sick calves drink little to none. Lowering her chances of getting sick will not help her gain.
2. Calves are born without an immune system. Good management practices are key to a successful calf program.
 - a. Colostrum time management
 - b. vaccinations
 - c. Clean water buckets
 - d. Clean bedding
 - e. The environment they were born in
 - i. Think clean/safe pen vs dirt/overcrowded pen