

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND EXTENSION

GETTING YOUR FARM READY FOR CALVING

Is your farm ready for calving?

Making sure your farm facilities, calving equipment and personnel are prepared is absolutely key to a successful calving season.

Farm Facilities

- **Designate a Calving Area**
 - Plan ahead: What will the weather be like? Will you be calving indoors or outside?
 - Clean, dry area that has limited contamination from bacteria
 - **If outside: Choose a smaller pasture closer to the house or barn**
 - Less area for the cow or heifer to go off and calve by herself
 - Easier to move into a corral or barn to assist with any calving issues
 - Easier to check 24hrs a day
 - Keep in mind "Windchill" and "Heat Index" affects on the Temperature

		ACTUAL THERMOMETER READING °F											
		50	40	30	20	10	0	-10	-20	-30	-40	50	60
		Equivalent temperature °F											
Wind Speed (Miles per Hour)	Calm	50	40	30	20	10	0	-10	-20	-30	-40	50	-60
	5	48	37	27	16	6	-5	-15	-26	-35	-47	57	-68
	10	40	28	16	3	-9	-22	-34	-46	-58	-71	-83	-95
	15	36	22	9	5	-18	-31	-45	-58	-72	-85	-99	-112
	20	32	18	4	-10	-24	-39	-53	-67	-81	-95	-110	-129
	25	30	16	1	-15	-29	-44	-59	-74	-88	-103	-118	-133
	30	28	13	-2	-18	-33	-49	-64	-79	-93	-109	-125	-140
35	27	11	-4	-20	-35	-52	-67	-82	-97	-113	-129	-145	
40	26	10	-5	-21	-37	-53	-69	-84	-100	-115	-132	-148	
45	25	9	-6	-22	-38	-54	-70	-85	-102	-117	-135	-150	

Zone 1 Little danger to mature animals
Zone 2 Increasing Danger; will freeze exposed flesh such as teats and scrotums; will stress animals causing latent diseases to appear.
Zone 3 Great danger especially to young animals.

Adapted from John Herrick, Iowa State University, Extension Veterinarian

		Relative Humidity (%)											
		30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85
Temperature (°F)	100	84	85	86	87	88	90	91	92	93	94	95	97
	98	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	93	94	95
	96	81	82	83	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93
	94	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91
	92	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	85	86	87	88	89
	90	78	79	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	86	87
	88	76	77	78	79	80	81	81	82	83	84	85	86
	86	75	76	77	78	78	79	80	81	81	82	83	84
	84	74	75	75	76	77	78	78	79	80	80	81	82
	82	73	73	74	75	75	76	77	77	78	79	79	80
	80	72	72	73	73	74	75	75	76	76	77	78	78
	78	70	71	71	72	73	73	74	74	75	78	76	76
	76	69	70	70	71	71	72	72	73	73	74	72	75

Temperature Humidity Index (THI)

Normal <75 Alert 75-78 Danger 79-83 Emergency >84

- **If Inside: Barn or Calving Barn**
 - Shelter from the elements - wind and cold (minimum 3 walls)
 - Clean dry bedding such as straw
 - Make sure to clean pens between cow-calf pairs to help prevent the spread of potential infections like calf scours
 - Space for multiple cows/heifers to calve at once - individually
 - Individual pens (12ft x 12ft minimum) for each pair eliminate potential mix-ups
 - Make moveable partitions with metal gates - use plywood or boards on the bottom to reduce draft and prevent calves from sticking their heads through.



- **Have a headcatch - This can be a full chute or a headgate that allows for safe handling of the cow/heifer**

Building Your Own Calving Kit

Each piece of equipment should be clean and accessible when calving:

- Ear tags and Tagger
- Halter and Rope
- Disposable Ob/Breeding Sleeves
- Disposable Gloves
- Stainless Steel Bucket
- Lube (squeeze bottle for easier use)
- Disinfectant (Nolvasan or Chlrohexidine)
- Clean Ob Chains or Nylon Calf Strap
- Flashlight with Extra Batteries
- 7% Tinture Iodine - Calf Naval Dip
- Bottle and Lamb Nipple
- Stomach Tube Feeder
- Alarm Clock - Battery Powered
- Towels and Hair Dryer for Drying a Calf

Personnel: Who's Helping with Calving?

- Do they know where you keep your calving supplies and how to use them?
- Are they familiar with your farm set up - designated calving area, where gates are?
- Are they familiar with your cattle? Are your cattle familiar with them?
 - Calving is a rough time to introduce new faces
- **Who is your Vet?**
 - Make sure you have a good relationship with your Vet
 - **Keep their number in your calving kit**

Get your calving season off to the right start by being prepared

Questions?

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