

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Headline: Calving Time Tips

WARSAW, Mo. – Calving time is upon many beef producers in the area. Below are a few tips for producers to consider this time of year.

Time of cow feeding has been shown to influence the time of day when calves are born. Cows fed at dusk or later tend to calve during the daylight hours. Altering the time of feeding as soon as one week prior to calving has been shown to affect the time of day that cows calve. Limiting hay access to 12 hours per day is an easy way to implement a night-time feeding program.

Know when to intervene to help cows and heifers with the calving process. Once the calving process begins, watch for signs of progress with delivery. If no progress is noticed after 30 minutes, intervention is warranted. Determine what the problem is and if it can be handled without additional expertise. Don't wait too long to call for veterinary assistance. Dead calves don't pay many bills.

If the weather is bad, provide a place to warm calves. Keep these areas clean and dry to prevent disease problems. If possible, segregate older calves from calves less than a week old. This greatly reduces scour causing pathogen transfer from older calves to younger calves.

Write down calf birthdates. This data can be used to track reproductive efficiency, used in the replacement heifer selection process, and helps in many other management areas.

Feeding lactating cows also needs to be considered. Much of the distiller's grains are now being de-oiled at the ethanol plants. This reduces the energy content of the distiller's grains. Rations may need to be adjusted to account for this decrease in energy.

Don't forget about the bulls this time of year either. Schedule a breeding soundness exam to make sure the bulls are ready to work later this spring. If problems are found, there is time to find adequate replacement bulls and upgrade the genetics at the same time.

If you have questions on any of these topics, contact me by e-mail at schmitze@missouri.edu or call the Benton County Extension Center at (660) 438-5012.