PROFECTUS LIVESTOCK SOLUTIONS

FALL FOUNDATIONS

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FALL 2025

CALF WEANING: TOP 10 BEST PRACTICES

By: Dr. Brian Dorcey

1 STRATEGIC TIMING

Aim for cooler fall weather to reduce stress if possible. Be mindful of the conditions on your operation to drive weaning timing such as cow condition, pasture conditions, and calf age.

2 PRE-WEANING VACCINATIONS

Administer vaccinations for respiratory diseases (e.g., IBR, BVD) and clostridial infections 2-4 weeks before weaning to boost immunity and reduce stress on the calves.

3 GRADUAL DIET TRANSITION

Introduce calves to a high-quality, palatable feed (grain or hay) 7-10 days before weaning to ease dietary shifts. Weaning will vary in calves that have been offered creep vs those whose previous sources of nutrition have been the cow and pasture grass.

4 MINIMIZE STRESS

Use low-stress handling techniques and avoid abrupt separation. Consider fence-line weaning to allow visual contact with dams.

5 ENSURE CLEAN WATER ACCESS

Provide fresh, clean water at all times to prevent dehydration and support feed intake. One of the biggest mistakes I see is not enough water space or a water height that is too tall for the calves.

6 MONITOR HEALTH CLOSELY

Check calves daily for signs of illness (e.g., lethargy, nasal discharge). Early intervention prevents disease spread. Walk newly weaned cattle 2x per day to get them used to you, and to detect disease early.

7 PROVIDE ADEQUATE SPACE

Ensure pens are spacious, dry, and well-ventilated to reduce stress and disease risk.

8 SUPPLEMENT NUTRITION

Offer a balanced ration with adequate protein and energy to support growth during the stressful weaning period. Managing starch in the rumen as these calves come on feed is paramount for both health and future performance.

9 CONTROL PARASITES

Deworm calves at weaning to reduce parasite loads, improving feed efficiency and health. High parasite loads from the summer pasture reduce the ability of our calves to respond to vaccines.

10 RECORD KEEPING

Track weaning dates, weights, and health treatments to monitor progress and plan for future management.

Implementing these practices promotes calf health and sets the stage for a productive herd. Consult your PLS veterinarian or sales rep for tailored advice. Together, we can keep your calves healthy and your farm running smoothly.

PIT PUMPING SAFETY TIPS

Detecting Hazardous Gases:

- Agitating & pumping pits releases ammonia, C02, hydrogen sulfide, and methane
- Hydrogen sulfide smells like rotten eggs
- Workers noses can become “used to” odor and may not detect when levels become dangerous
- Hydrogen sulfide is heavier than air, so the gas is usually at “pig level”
- Use a hydrogen sulfide detector to monitor

Awareness of Foam:

- The cause of foaming is uncertain
- Foam contains lots of dangerous and flammable gases (methane & hydrogen sulfide)
- Gases from foam can cause a flash fire

Adequate ventilation:

- Fully open all ventilation curtains or ventilation pivot doors
- Tag all doors to note that it is unsafe to enter during agitation
- Run ventilation fans at max speed; Continue max speed for 30 minutes after pumping has ended before re-entering the building.

Preventing Fires:

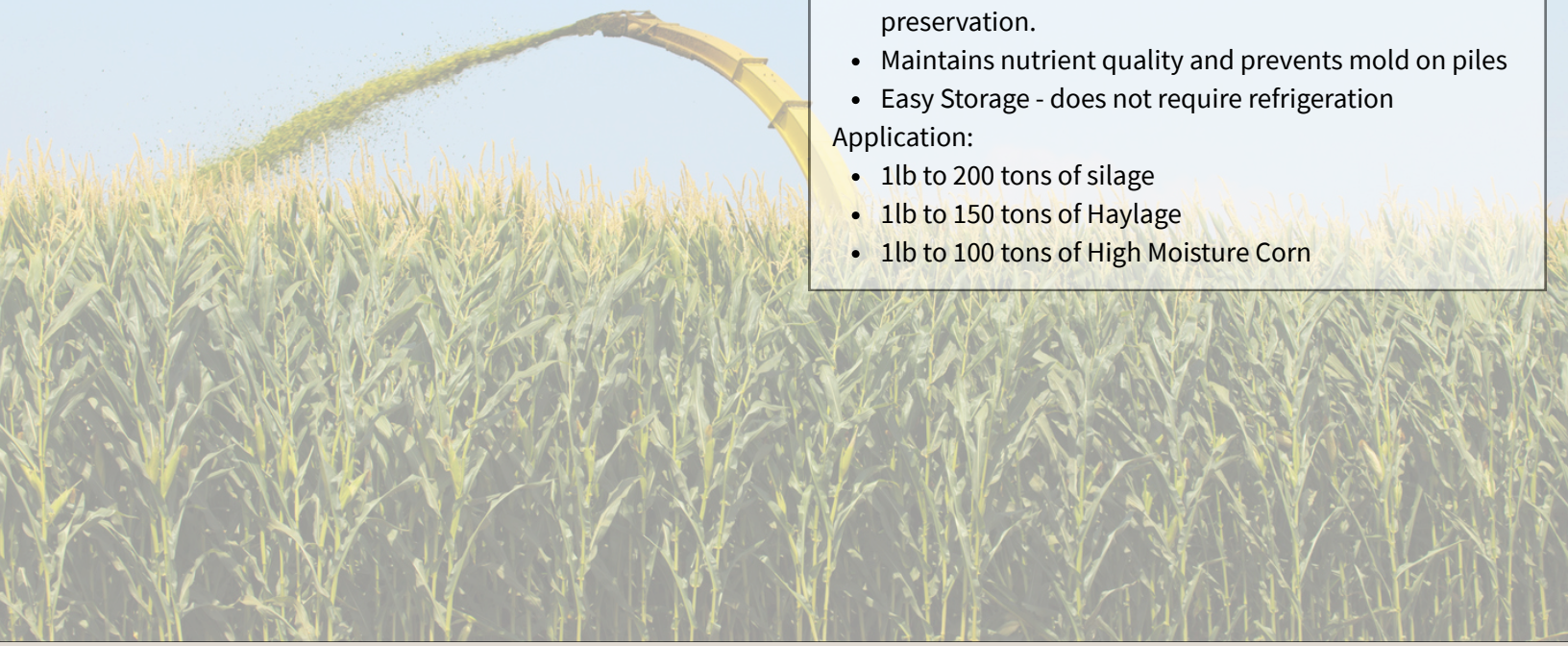
- Use a pit additive to decrease foaming
- Make sure all barn fans are running at peak operating efficiency before pumping a foaming pit
- Shut off anything that could cause a spark - light switches and feed lines
- Turn off electrical power to any non-ventilation equipment and extinguish any pilot lights or other ignition sources

IN CASE OF A FIRE, REMEMBER ‘R.A.C.E.’

RESCUE those in immediate danger, if you can do so safely
ANNOUNCE to others the immediate need to evacuate the facility
CONTAIN the fire by closing doors and windows
EVACUATE immediately and go straight to a designated meeting spot upon leaving the building

SILAGE CHOPPING: IN FULL SWING

Silage plays a crucial role in cattle operations, providing a consistent and cost-effective source of forage. However, optimal silage management is essential to maximize its nutritional value and minimize losses.



Protect one of the biggest investments in your livestock operation with PLS Silage Inoculant

- Lactic acid bacteria and enzymes work to lower the pH of your feedstuffs quickly, which improves the fermentation process of silage and leads to better preservation.
- Maintains nutrient quality and prevents mold on piles
- Easy Storage - does not require refrigeration

Application:

- 1lb to 200 tons of silage
- 1lb to 150 tons of Haylage
- 1lb to 100 tons of High Moisture Corn