

## CALVES AND COLD WEATHER

### DEFINITION OF COLD FOR A CALF

During the first 3 weeks of age, the thermal neutral zone (TNZ) or the air temperature that is optimal for the calf, is between 15 degrees and 20 degrees Celsius. For older calves, the range is between 10 and 20 degrees Celsius. When temperatures fall below these minimum levels, the calf requires extra energy to keep warm, stay healthy and to continue to grow and thrive.

Calves are born with very little body fat reserves. They have a fine hair coat that is not thick enough to keep them warm. Therefore newborn calves are very vulnerable to stress from cold weather conditions.

### HOW TO HELP CALVES SURVIVE AND THRIVE IN COLD WEATHER

1. Ensure the calves receive **4 – 6 litres of good quality colostrum within 8 hours** of birth. Continue feeding transition milk for the next 3 days or start feeding Wet Nurse™ milk replacer right away.
2. When environmental temperatures drop **below 4°C for long periods**, increase the amount of milk or milk replacer being fed by up to 50% by providing the calves with a **THIRD feeding** per day instead of the usual two. **Calves require extra energy to keep warm in cold weather.**
3. Mix milk replacer powder with **fresh potable water** to make a solution.
4. Feed milk or milk replacer at **not less than 38 degrees Celsius** and not higher than 44 degrees Celsius.
5. Ensure the calves have **clean dry deep bedding** at all times.
6. Keep the calves in a dry **draft-free** environment.
7. When possible, **provide heat** and maintain at a **constant temperature.**
8. **Check on calves** regularly
9. Remember to **offer fresh clean potable water** at all times.

For more tips on keeping your calves healthy and happy check [www.calfcare.ca](http://www.calfcare.ca)



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