

Calf Housing and Environments Series

VII. Recommendations for Calf Housing

Based on a review of the literature on calf housing from birth to post-weaning, to optimize calf health and comfort, the following housing recommendations are provided:

- Birth can occur in group or individual maternity pens, given hygiene considerations, the ability to observe for possible calving assistance, and facilities to assist in delivery.
- The calf should be removed from the cow *immediately* and fed at least 100 g of IgG (4 quarts of colostrum to Holsteins and 3 quarts to Jerseys.)
- Transportation to the calf-rearing area should be done in cleaned, bedded, and well-ventilated transport vehicles.
- For the first four weeks of life, calves should be in individual hutches or pens to prevent contact with older animals and disease transmission during this vulnerable period.
- During the second month of life or until weaning, small group pens, or superhutches can be used with 3 to 8 calves in each to facilitate socialization and encourage solid feed consumption.
- Post-weaning, larger group pens, free stalls, or dry lot corrals with shades can be used for older calves, if allowed to "transition" through smaller groups. It will still be necessary to be able to observe these calves for signs of respiratory disease and have facilities for treatment.

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