

SHOULD YOU WEAN YOUR CALVES EARLY?



Mark Werner
Beef Production
Consultant
(507) 990-8235



Gretta Anderson
Beef Consultant &
Calf Specialist
(507) 259-1210



Missy Hoffman
Small Ruminant &
Beef Nutrition Cnslt
(651) 380-0987



Carl Sackreiter
Beef Production
Consultant
(507) 421-4942

651-923-6001 | agpartners.net |



SHOULD YOU CONSIDER EARLY WEANING THIS FALL?

Early weaning can benefit the calf and cow, and can help stretch forage resources, especially in drought or low forage conditions.

POSITIVE IMPACT ON FORAGE AND COW CONDITION

Use forage availability and cow body condition score (BCS) as your barometer to drive your decision-making on whether to wean calves early. Drought conditions with reduced pasture production and forage quality can result in lower body condition and milk production of the cows. *If cows score less than five on a body condition scale, we recommend you consider weaning the calves.*

Forage consumption can drop up to 30% when calves are weaned early, helping alleviate grazing pressure. In other words, for

approximately every three calves weaned, you can save the forage requirements of one cow.

Additionally, body condition scores are consistently higher for cows when their calves are weaned early because they have fewer nutritional requirements of producing milk. Body condition scores tend to increase by at least 0.5 for early weaning cows versus normal weaning cows with similar forage resources. A major advantage of cows scoring a better body condition going into winter is that it takes less forage and supplementation to maintain that good body condition until calving.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EARLY WEANING THE CALF

It's essential when early weaning to provide an adequate supplement to forage that will replace milk, creep feed, and mineral. Purina has several options to meet the needs of the calf and maximize on farm feed resources.

Purina starters are formulated to meet nutrients needs of weaned calves by providing palatable feed. An added benefit of Purina® starters is that they feature RX3® Immune Support Technology®, which helps optimize calves' response to stress and common calf health challenges, an important factor for early weaned calves with immature immune systems. Here is what is recommended depending on farm feed resources.

- **PRECON:** This is a complete feed that requires minimal forage. If forage resources are limited or a highly palatable complete feed fits your needs, then this is the option. The product should be hand-fed at 10 lbs/head/d to get the maximum benefit of the nutrients to meet the needs of a weaned calf.
- **STRESS CARE 5:** A supplement formulated to be fed with on-farm forages. It was designed to be fed with free-choice hay. But it also fits well with a weaning diet containing hay and corn silage. This is to be fed at 5 lbs/d/d with forage. Another highly palatable feed with minimal starch to help transition the rumen and maximize the intake of hay.
- **STRESS CARE 1:** This is a supplement that works well in TMR rations formulated by a nutritionist and utilize on farm feed ingredients. The supplement delivers that same mineral and vitamin fortification of the other option and RX3 in a 1 lb/hd/d pellet.

We also recommend providing one Stress Tub for every 25-30 head during the starter period with all of these programs. Reach out to your Ag Partners location or nutritionist to discuss the options that best fit your operation.

