


# Cow/Calf Production



## DID YOU KNOW?

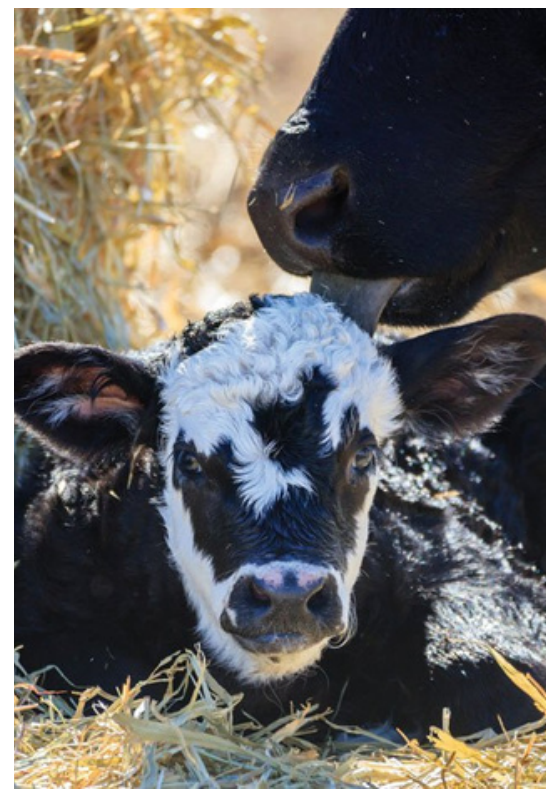
-  **Cow:** Female cow that has produced one or more calves
-  **Calves:** Young cattle of either sex, less than one year of age
-  **Weaning:** To take a calf from its mother so it can no longer nurse.
-  **Offspring:** The young produced from the mating of male and female animal
-  **Gestation:** The period from the date of conception to when the calf is born
-  **Bovine:** The species to which cattle belong.

## HOW DOES A COW/CALF PRODUCTION WORK?

Cows can be bred at any time in the year depending on when you want your calves to be born. Their breeding season last 64 days, which gives you three times to breed them (every 21 days). Once pregnant, it will last between 279-287 days; you should observe them twice daily.

After the appearance of the water bag, the calf should be born within 4 hours. The calf should be normally born within 2-3 hours. If you need to pull the calf it is recommended to do it by hand because it is less likely you will injure the calf.

In beef cattle, it is pretty rare for cattle to have twins, and is more common in dairy cattle. A beef cow pregnant with twins is more likely to have them pulled because beef cows are not built to have twins.





# TAKING CARE OF CALVES

Once calves are born they need colostrum which is milk that contains antibodies as soon as possible to help build their immune system. In Iowa, they need to be vaccinated 14-21 days prior to weaning so they have a better immune response. After weaning, calves should receive a second vaccination as well.

Calves are very prone to getting scours which is severe diarrhea that is caused by infections. The main treatment for this is providing water and electrolytes by oral or intravenously ( through their veins).



## WEANING OF CALVES

Calves can be weaned at 12 weeks of age or around 220 pounds. There are three different ways to wean calves:

1. **Abrupt Separation (traditional method)** is when you separate the cow and calf so they come in close contact with each other. This can cause a high amount of stress.
2. **Fenceline Weaning** is separating the cow and calf through opposite sides of a fenceline so they can still have nose-to-nose contact. This can help reduce the amount of stress.
3. **Two Stage Weaning** starts with placing a nose flap on the calf to keep it from nursing so it stays with the cow. Stage two of this method happens on days 10-14 and you remove the nose flap while separating the calf and cow at the same time.



## FUN BEEF FACTS

- Cows carrying bull calves tend to have a longer gestation length compared to a heifer.
- A newborn calf can weigh up to 90 pounds.
- Calves can stand within the first 30 minutes after birth but can take up to 2 hours.
- Calves are born without an immune system.

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Buchanan, Delaware,  
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## JOKE OF THE DAY

What did the mama cow say to the baby cow?

It's pasture bedtime!