



Meadowlark Extension District Weekly Agent News Articles

Fenceline

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Livestock-Natural Resources

Weaning Time

Bawling calves. Heard any lately? There's been considerable research on the best method to wean calves. Complete removal, fence line weaning and more. Whatever method you choose, it should best suit your needs and minimize weight loss, sickness and stress.

Weaning calves is mostly about common sense. Provide palatable grass hay, start them off slowly on grain, if you want them to gain. Provide salt and mineral and keep a watchful eye, for sickness. Pre-weaning vaccinations are preferred. If not done then, vaccinate the day of weaning. Your vet can help you with your health program, but usually they are given Blackleg, IBR, BVD and RSV. The vet might suggest deworming, lice and grub control.

Don't mix cattle from different sources, if you can help it. Weaning is a big stress on calves. Research shows, that having visual contact with mother cow, can relieve some stress. Fenceline weaning works, as well as the nose flaps. Using the nose flaps, be sure to follow the directions, they should not be left on more than 5 days, they can create sores, if left in too long.

They aren't 100%, sometimes calves can figure out how to get them off. We have used them, and it sure seems to help with the amount of bawling. Some of the research I heard about this summer suggests the cows stress out just as bad as the calves. For that, I guess fence line weaning is the best.