

2003

## YON FAMILY FARMS WEANING/PRECONDITIONING METHOD

*LOW COST – EFFECTIVE- PROFITABLE*

### 2-4 Weeks Prior to Weaning

- **Be sure your calves are properly identified** so that you can record their weaning weights. If not tagged at birth, tag them now and match them up to their dams over the next few weeks before pulling the calves off. (Or leave them separated while you are working them and match them up when you put them back with dams.)
- **Weigh Calves** for weaning weights - try to do it when the group average is close to 205 days.
- **Treat for Internal & External Parasites**
- **Vaccinate using Beef Quality Assurance Guidelines**  
7-way Clostridials, Haemophilus Somnus, 5-way Lepto, 4-way Respiratory, and Pastuerella
- *We recommend using a killed respiratory vaccine as the calves are going back with the cows, unless the cow herd has a history of annual vaccination with modified live respiratory (MLV) vaccine, in which case MLV would be fine to use for the calves. (Consult your veterinarian if not sure.)*
- **Knife castrate** any calves that have not been done at an earlier age.
- **Put out Creep Feeder**
- We use Soy Hull Pellets in our creep feeder. Soy Hull Pellets are safe, economical, and palatable. Their feeding value is roughly equivalent to oats. Soy hull pellets can be delivered by an auger truck directly into the feeder and require no additional mixing or processing. They will grow calves without fattening them.
- **Free choice, high quality minerals, containing an ionophore**, should be available at all times. (We put the mineral pan in the creep pen.)

Calves will gain economically on soyhulls, grass and milk and adjust to going on feed before you pull them off their mamas. You will be able to measure the job the dam is doing since you took your weights before putting out the feed. In 2-4 weeks they will eating well and are ready to wean.

### At Weaning

- **Booster all the vaccines** given pre-weaning, following label directions. Use a modified live respiratory vaccine regardless of cow herd vaccination history as you are pulling the calves from the pregnant cows.
- Treat for internal & external parasites if you did not at pre-weaning.

**Fence Line Weaning** – Put calves in a small pasture, right beside the cows, with good grass & clean water, the best bale of hay you have, and pull the creep feeder in, filled with soyhull pellets. You must have a fence that will keep cows and calves apart. We use 5-strand electric with 3 hot wires. This method goes against the conventional wisdom of, out of sight, out of mind, but it works so well. We have done this for two years. The calves and cows are both less stressed as they can still see each other and most of the bawling and fence walking is over by day 3. You can then move your cows if needed. Continue to allow calves to graze the best grass you have and provide the best grass hay you have while continuing to supplement with soyhulls or a growing ration for 30-45 days. Again, it is important to provide a free choice, high quality mineral, containing an ionophore, at all times. If you prefer to hand feed at this time, 8-12 pounds per head per day should be adequate.

**You have just successfully:** Added value to your calves, prepared your calves for the stress of transporting them and settling them into a new home, and given your calves a solid health foundation. They should perform well and be profitable for you, as well as the next owner, and you have **Done the Right Thing!**

*We highly recommend that you consult with your Veterinarian to plan your weaning system and select your vaccines. We will be glad to help in any way, from selecting your animal health products, to attaining soy hull pellets or other feeds, minerals, fencing, or feeding equipment.*