



Probiotec Limited 83 Cherry Lane, Laverton VIC 3026 Ph 1800 067 919 Fax +61 3 9369 6730 www.probiotec.com.au



Information Sheet - Calf Weaning.



General.

- Age and general appearance of the calf are major factors in determining the time of weaning.
- Calves can be weaned as early as 6 - 8 weeks of age.
- If the calf is eating 1kg or more of pellets or concentrates per day for four (4) consecutive days it can generally be weaned safely.
- Weaned calves should be of reasonable size (greater than 80 kg's in weight) and be seen to be ruminating.
- If the calf is small or below 80 kg's in weight but older than 6 - 8 weeks it should be kept on milk replacer and pellets or concentrates longer to ensure that the rumen is fully developed.

Methods of Weaning.

- Research has confirmed that there is very little difference in abrupt ("Cold Turkey") weaning and gradual ("Reduction") weaning.
- The abrupt ("cold turkey") weaning method is where milk or milk replacer is suddenly and completely removed from the calf's diet.
- The gradual ("reduction") weaning method is where the amount of milk or milk replacer fed is gradually reduced until the calf gets no milk or milk replacer.
- The gradual ("reduction") weaning method can also be used where water is gradually substituted for milk or milk replacer until no milk or milk replacer or water is fed at all.
- When using the abrupt ("cold turkey") weaning method it is important to watch calves closely to ensure that no set backs or ill affects are suffered by the calf.

Important Points.

- Monitor calves closely to ensure that no growth set backs occur and calves do not loose condition.
- Shelter must be provided at weaning and after weaning.
- Do not change feeds or make housing changes at the same time as weaning.
- Group weaned animals based on similar age and size.
- Sufficient quantities of good quality hay, pellets or concentrates along with grass must be available to calves after weaning.
- Clean fresh water must be available at all times.

For Further information on any of the points mentioned above contact your Palastart representative on
1800 067 919.

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