



SMR 11: Welfare Standards for the Protection of Calves

January 2021

The aim of these requirements is to protect the welfare of calves by setting a minimum standard for their care and husbandry. They apply to all keepers of calves, in addition to the requirements for the welfare of farmed animals (please note SMR 13).

Main requirements

The following minimum standards have to be met when rearing or fattening calves:

- All housed calves must be inspected at least twice a day, and outdoor calves at least once a day.
- Calves must not be tethered with the exception of group-housed calves which may be tethered for a period of not more than one hour when being fed milk or milk substitute.
- For individual calf pens:
 - pen length shall be at least equal to the body length of the calf when standing, to allow it to stand, turn, lie down and groom itself
 - pen width shall be at least equal to the height of the calf at the withers when standing.
- Calves older than 8 weeks should not be penned singly, unless a vet has advised that it needs to remain in isolation or is under treatment.
- Calf accommodation must be clean and disinfected as appropriate, have bedding and be lit by natural or artificial means.
- Calves should have:
 - colostrum as soon as possible after they are born and, in any event, within 6 hours of life
 - sufficient feed appropriate to their age
 - access to clean drinking water at all times.
- Calves require at least two liquid feeds per day to gain sufficient nutrition. Only when solid feed can be properly digested should it be considered a 'feed'. Roughage should be provided from two weeks of age.

Field checks

- Check that calf housing meets the requirements above.
- Check the farmer has a copy or access to the Code of Practice for the Welfare of Livestock Cattle.

Good practice

- Follow guidelines given in the Code of Practice for housing calves.
- Milk fed to calves on bovine TB restricted premises should be appropriately heat treated to kill *Mycobacterium bovis*.
- Milk from infected cows should NOT be fed to calves.
- Provided milk from bovine TB infected cows (reactors or clinical cases) is fed only to animals on the same farm after appropriate heat treatment (pasteurisation will kill *Mycobacterium bovis*) the livestock keeper is compliant with EU rules.
- If calves are reared in a system where milk is provided by artificial means, their feed intake should be closely monitored. If calves have a reduced or slower feed intake, this is often an early sign of disease.
- Sick or injured calves must be isolated in suitable accommodation with dry comfortable bedding and access to food and water.

For further information please contact:

Animal and Plant Health Agency

See 'Useful Contacts' factsheet within this pack

www.gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/ahw/animal-welfare/livestockwelfare