

ATTENTION TO DETAIL IS VITAL WHEN REARING NEWBORN CALVES

By *Brian Delaney* - (B.Agr.Sc)

“A good start is half the work.” This saying rings especially true when it comes to raising newborn calves. With the busy workload during calving season, any tools or practices that can help prevent calf sickness are invaluable. Calf illness not only brings immediate challenges, but it can also result in significant hidden costs due to reduced production throughout the calf's life. Paying attention to detail in two key areas can be crucial for achieving that “good start” and ensuring long-term success.

CALF IMMUNITY - Enhancing the Calf's Ability to Fight Infections

1. Vaccinate cows to ensure they produce colostrum rich in antibodies that will protect the newborn calf.
2. Feed Grennan's Immuno additive to cows **one** month pre-calving to improve the quality of their colostrum and enhance its immune-boosting properties.
3. Ensure the calf receives **3 litres** of this Immuno-enriched colostrum within the first two hours after birth. This is critical for providing vital nutrients and immunity.
4. Use Gut Guard gel **2-3 hours** after colostrum to provide additional immune support, especially during the early days of the calf's life.
5. If feeding milk replacer, consider using the added immune support in Lungbooster and Gutguard, available in Wonderthrive milk replacer.

HYGIENE - Reducing Disease-Causing Bacteria in the Newborn's Environment

1. Thoroughly clean and disinfect calf housing before the busy spring season begins. Ensuring a clean environment sets the foundation for calf health.
2. Scrub and disinfect all water and feed equipment to remove biofilms and bacteria that can foster infection.
3. If storing colostrum, maintaining high hygiene standards is essential to ensure its quality and safety for the calf.
4. Test water to verify it's free from microbial contaminants that could harm newborn calves.
5. Address ventilation issues in calf housing to remove airborne bacteria, while ensuring there are no **draughts** that can stress the calves.



PRE-CALVING NUTS AND COW BCS

By Damien Guinan - (B.Agr.Sc)

Most dairy farms will be **starting** to calve in the next few weeks. As discussed in last **month's** article, it is important to correctly balance minerals to ensure a smooth transition period. Another aspect to consider is the protein and energy **requirements** of the cow prior to calving. As a cow approaches calving, her DMI intake will reduce significantly.

Where silage quality is poor, it may be necessary to supplement cows with **concentrates**. See the table below for recommended feeding rates. Our **Easy Calver Nut** or **Immuno Pre-Calver Nut** is the ideal supplement. The oat- and soya-based formulation will provide the necessary protein for colostrum production, while also aiding an easy calving and improving calf vigour.

Silage DMD	BCS<2.5 12-14 week dry	BCS 2.5-3.0 8-10 weeks dry	BCS > 3.0 8 weeks dry
72	Silage +1kg	Silage Ad-lib	Silage restricted
68	Silage +2kg	Silage +1kg	Silage Ad-lib
64	Silage + 3kg	Silage +2kg	Silage Ad-lib
60	Silage + 4kg	Silage + 3kg	Silage +1kg

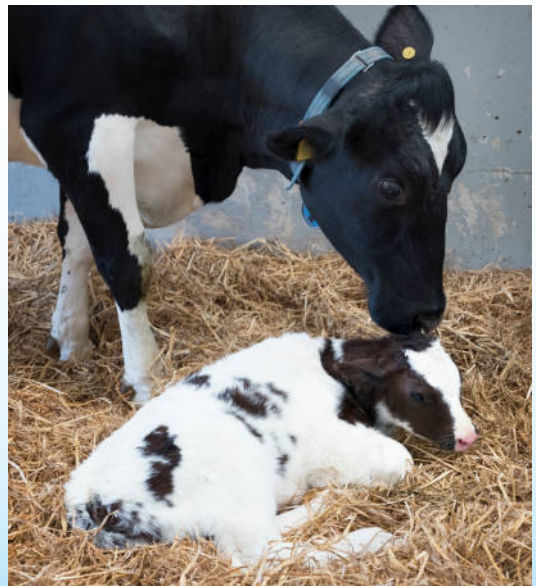
FARMERS SHOULD ASSESS BCS AGAIN.

Although it is very hard to alter a cow's BCS at this late stage of pregnancy, cows should be grouped according to BCS and fed accordingly.

Cows that are thin typically experience more difficult calvings and have poorer energy reserves. Ensuring an energy-dense diet pre-calving will alleviate these issues.

Similarly, over-conditioned cows can face the same problems. It's important not to overfeed these over-conditioned cows to ensure no more fat is laid down.

As always, the Grennan's team is on hand to help during the busy calving period. Please do not hesitate to get in contact.



GUT GUARD

Natural Protection Against Scours and Gut Infections

Gut Guard is a highly effective, natural solution designed to prevent gut infections and scours in young animals. It targets harmful pathogens like **Cryptosporidium**, **Clostridia**, **E. coli**, and **Coccidiosis**, preventing them from attaching to the gut wall and causing infections.

KEY BENEFITS:

- **Prevents Pathogens:** Creates a natural barrier against common scour-causing pathogens.
- **Reduces Scours:** Minimizes the duration and severity of scours, helping animals recover faster.
- **Effective Early Use:** Administer within 2-3 hours after the first colostrum feed for best results.
- **Promotes Healthy Gut Flora:** Encourages the development of beneficial gut microflora for improved digestion and immunity.
- **Natural and Astringent:** Tightens gut walls, making it harder for pathogens to establish an infection.

Remember: For optimal protection, feed Gut Guard within the first few hours of life to safeguard against scours and gut infections.

AVAILABLE AS

Wonder Thrive Calf Milk Replacer + Gut Guard and /or Gut Guard 250 ml Gel



WONDER THRIVE

The Ultimate Calf Rearing Solution

All our WONDER THRIVE MILK REPLACER products are based on the same, unique formulation that we launched almost a decade ago. We are proud to say this has turned out to be a real winning formulation and Wonder Thrive Milk powders now rear tens of thousands of calves annually. It has gained an unbeatable reputation for delivering excellent health status, superior growth rates and trouble free calf rearing for farmers all over Ireland.

WONDER THRIVE IS AVAILABLE IN 4 DIFFERENT PACKAGES:

WONDER THRIVE ORIGINAL; The original basic high quality formulation, designed to maximise health and thrive in calves. Very popular.

WONDER THRIVE WITH LUNG BOOSTER PLUS; Lungbooster Plus is a completely natural health promoting additive that works extremely well. It helps clear mucus from the calf's airways, reducing the risk of many respiratory pathogens gaining a foothold for disease and it also promotes gut health by preventing several scour causing pathogens from latching onto the gut wall. Our biggest seller.

WONDER THRIVE WITH GUT GUARD: This formulation is designed to really strengthen the gut wall and promote gut health. We find it helps prevent a range of scour causing infections like Coccidiosis and E. coli. Works really well on farms with a history of scour.

HI SKIM WONDER THRIVE + GUT GUARD: This version contains a higher level of skim than the other Wonder thrive powders and is designed with Once a day feeding and /or Replacement Heifers in mind. Gut Guard is added for an extra layer of gut health insurance where bigger individual feeds might be the order of the day.

Available nationwide in 20kg bags (50 bags per pallet).



CROP CHOICES 2025

It's that time of year again, when decisions have to be made as regards what crops to sow. The crop margin projections here are based on 2024 harvest grain prices & /or forage crop values + our best guess at 2025 input prices. These figures are intended as a guide only and actual crop values and input prices for 2025 may vary widely from these.

They don't make for pleasant reading, particularly for those of you who have to take land rental costs out of those margins, but hopefully they will give you a steer on the economics of the different crops. Yield figures could possibly be described as optimistic in some cases, but the figures do show the importance of achieving good yields. We have assumed you will avail of the €100/acre straw incorporation subsidy for all Wheat & Oaten straw. Please don't hesitate to contact any of our crop specialists if you wish to discuss further, and don't forget to order seed as soon as possible to avoid disappointment.

Harvest 2025 - Crop Margin Projections	Winter Barley	Winter Wheat	Winter Oats	Spring Wheat	Spring Barley	Spring Oats	Spring Beans	Fodder Beet	Forage Maize (Without Plastic)
Input Costs									
Seed	45	43	45	45	39	43	60	105	130
Base Fertiliser (3 X 50kg @ 7.30 or 4x 50 kg @ 10.5 25 @ 500)	88	100	81	94	80	75	85	220	210
Nitrogen Top Dressing	81	89	50	67	59	41	0	55	0
Trace Elements	12	15	10	10	10	10	6	10	10
Weed Control	30	30	18	16	16	15	40	105	35
Slug/ Aphid / Insect control	6	5	4	3	3	3	0	5	0
Growth Regulator	16	15	15	10	5	15	0	0	0
Disease Control + Trace Mins	70	140	65	70	50	50	40	25	0
Roundup	10	10	10	10	10	10	5	15	10
Wild Oat control - spraying or roguing	15	15	5	15	15	5	15	10	0
Total Variable / Costs	373	462	303	339	287	266	251	550	395
Interest on Inputs	16	20	10	7	8	7	7	20	
Total Input Costs (a)	389	482	313	346	295	273	258	570	395
Fixed Costs (2024 Contractor Charges)									
Plough, Till & Sow	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	140	140
Rolling	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	0	0
Fert & Spray Applications	75	100	65	60	55	45	20	90	40
Harvesting/Swathing/Dessication	70	75	75	70	70	70	75	170	170
Transport	18	20	15	15	16	14	12	150	100
Straw Turning & Baling	60	0	0	0	50	0	0	0	0
Total Fixed Costs (b)	333	305	265	255	301	239	217	550	450
Total Costs (Excluding Land Rental) (a+b) = (c)	722	787	578	601	596	512	475	1120	845
Projected Earnings									
Protein Subsidy	0	0	0	0	0	0	200	0	0
Barley Straw @ 25 /bale; Wheat & Oaten Straw Chopping Sub	250	100	100	100	200	100	0	0	0
Expected Grain Yield (Tonnes/acre)	3.50	4.0	3.25	3.00	3.00	2.80	2.25	35	25
Est value /tonne (Beans & Cereals @ 20%; Beet & MAize as is)	200	210	200	210	200	200	240	65	75
Forage Storage /Washing /Chopping Costs per acre	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-400	-125
Total Earnings (d)	950	940	750	730	800	660	740	1875	1750
Expected Margin per acre (before Land Rental) (d-c)	228	153	172	129	204	148	265	755	905