

**NOVEMBER 22**

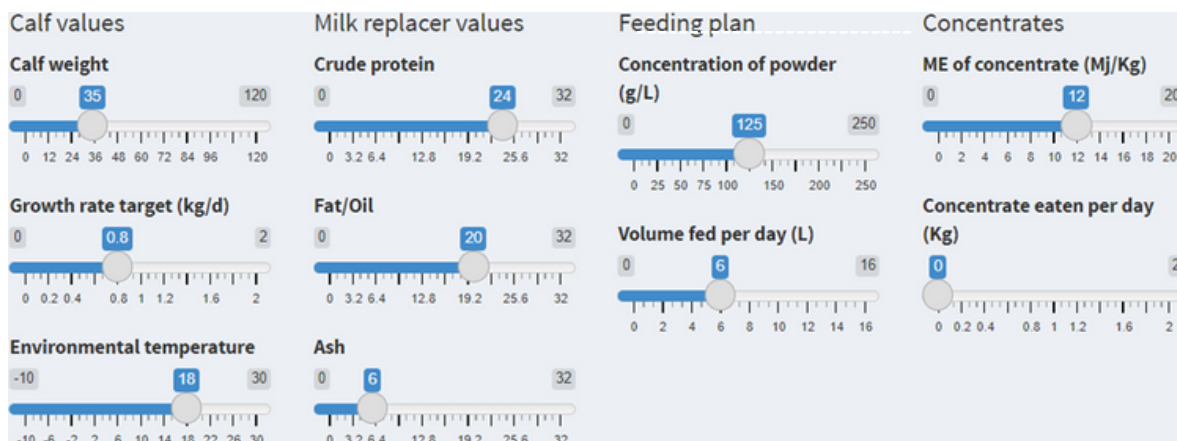
Hi all,

Clocks have just been turned back and shorter days have crept upon us, particularly surprising when we were just having 20 degree afternoons much more reminiscent of summertime. Forecasts for the future seem increasingly unreliable – war, weather and Westminster are keeping us all guessing. However, you do have control over your current systems and protocols. Reviewing and tweaking them to glean additional efficiencies should definitely make the to-do list.

The most efficient period in a cow's life for converting feed to growth is during the first 2 months of life. This period is critical – if you can get it right, you are not only making the most of your whole milk/milk replacer, you are also setting up your stock to have the best start. These animals aren't providing any returns for the next two years, but with an optimal beginning they'll be healthy and resilient. All being well, this lends itself to high productivity and longevity which has benefits both financially and environmentally. Calves with poorer beginnings are more likely to be lost early on, sadly wasting the resources you've dedicated to them.

When things are generally going to plan with the calves, it can be difficult to pinpoint how well and whether improvements can be made. This is where we need to dig up further information to assess where we are and make some realistic targets of where we would like to be.

Have a look at this really handy tool produced by the University of Nottingham. Just type in "Nottingham herd health toolkit" into Google and pick the site hosted by "shinyapps" (<https://herdhealth.shinyapps.io/toolkit/>). There are a few calculators to play with, but I wanted to draw your attention to the 'Milk replacer calculator'. On the left hand side you'll see a menu with calf health and when you select it, there are several options, including this milk replacer calculator. It's a case of dragging the values to the left and right to match your farm and the nutritional information from your milk replacer. You can see an example below:



As you can appreciate, the above calculator will not take into account disease which is likely to decrease volume/weight consumed and divert nutrition from growth.

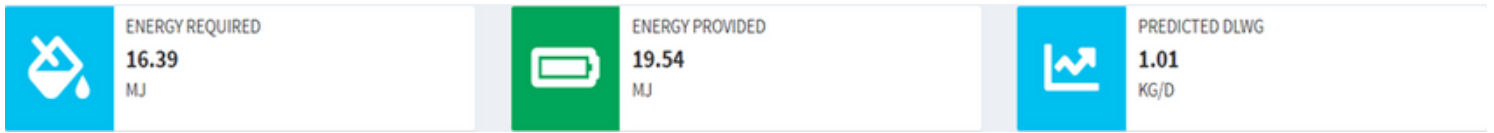
## MEETINGS COMING UP

MEDICINE HANDLING COURSE  
@ THE PRACTICE ON  
THURSDAY 24TH NOVEMBER  
11AM TO 1PM



-SUITABLE FOR BEEF AND SHEEP





With this information, the calculator predicts energy required by the calves; the energy provided by their feeding regime and an estimated daily liveweight gain. A 35kg calf on a balmy 20 degree summer's day requires 16MJ of energy to survive and grow. The same calf on a chilly 5 degree winters day requires 18MJ. The average 4l of milk or replacer provides 12MJ - so even on that warm day we are falling below par. 6l provides 17MJ, so this needs to be our starting point to increase from. It is incredible to see the difference extra volume makes, or a drop in environmental temperature!

Now that you have confirmed what daily liveweight gains your calves should be making, it's time to track as to whether they are achieving them.

What you need is:

- A weigh tape or scales, at time of birth or as close to it as practical
- A dedicated means of recording, helping you to make comparisons easily
- Ten minutes to consider what you've found!

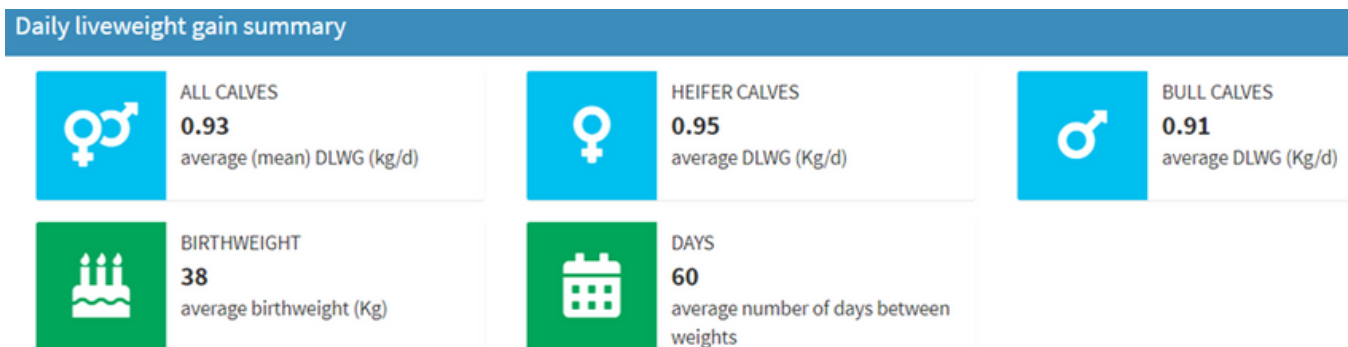
How you will benefit:

- Growth rates: compare between individuals, and groups of calves
- Identify underperforming calves: those falling below the norm, can you see why?
- Localize any problems in the system to a specific environmental change or situation
- Maximize efficient growth!

Calculate average daily liveweight gain by dividing the weight difference between the two weigh-ins by the number of days between them. The more times you weigh – ideally once a month – the more you can narrow down on specific difficulties or events the calves have faced. To help aid data collection the herd health toolkit previously mentioned has a weight gain calculator. Download the Excel template found on the site and complete as you go:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	Calf ID	Birth date	Sex	Breed	First date	First weight	Second date	Second weight
2	212	01/03/2019	M	HF	03/03/2019	40	15/05/2019	95
3	213	03/03/2019	M	BBx	04/03/2019	38	15/05/2019	90
4	214	07/03/2019	F	HF	13/03/2019	35	15/05/2019	85
5	215	11/03/2019	F	HF	13/03/2019	40	15/05/2019	80

Upload your sheet to get the following summary, as well as DLWG by sex and breed:



These tools can help you make the decisions you'd already been considering, for example, changing milk replacer, increasing volume fed or investing in lamps and jackets to keep the calves warm. The two calculators are free and easy to use, providing you with this extra information to assist management decisions going forward.

## SKITTLES EVENING UPDATE

THANK YOU!

We held three Skittle Socials in October, across the practice. Pewsey, Luckington and Guiting Power saw crowds of you descend to bowl, share a drink and raise money in aid of **The DPJ Foundation and The Farming Network**. I'm sure those of you in attendance would agree they were a great success! Across three nights **we raised £730.60** through raffle sales! Final total to come once all monies are in! Thank you for your attendance, bowling skills and generous donations. Thank you also to the sponsors for the raffle prizes and providing food and drink.

## CONGRATULATIONS!

We love an opportunity to shout about the variety of farms we work with and the achievements you make, and so are particularly pleased with the following:

-Congratulations to **Homer Farming Ltd and Ed Bailey** for winning the "Zero Lameness" CREAM award.

-Congratulations to **Ian Boyd** winning the Farmers Weekly "Grassland Manager of the Year 2022"

## OPPORTUNITY TO WORK WITHIN FARMING ENVIRONMENT

### PART-TIME VACANCY IN DAIRY FARMING ENVIRONMENT South Glos/North Wilts AREA

National Milk Records plc is looking for an enthusiastic person to become a part-time, self-employed Milk Recorder/Milk Sampler, visiting approx. 8 dairy farms in the South Gloucestershire/North Wiltshire area. The work involves taking individual cow milk samples and updating computerized records.

Hours will vary but the work will take up approximately 5-8 early mornings and 5-8 afternoons per month and applicants must have their own transport. Perfect work if you enjoy the outdoor life. Approx. earnings: £500 approx. month.

**Please contact: [janemo@nmrp.com](mailto:janemo@nmrp.com) for more details.**



Best wishes

Joe Pescod  
BVetMed MRCVS

## VET TECH - UPDATE

Vet tech services are well underway, you'll see Rosie, Zoe and Toby busy disbudding and freeze-branding cattle. Following on from the above, they are also available to weigh and record and keep track of how your calves are performing!

COMPASSION RESPECT INTEGRITY SUSTAINABILITY PROGRESSION CARE

T: 01666 823035 Option "1" for visits or enquiries, "2" for medicines or shop, "3" for TB testing