

# Buying Calves

If you are not breeding them yourself calves can be purchased from a livestock sales complex in your area. Most have an auction about once a week. Most calves at the sales come from dairy farms so are more readily available in the spring. You can try buying direct from a dairy farm if you know anybody.

What to look for

- They are at least four days old
- Have been fed colostrum for the first four days of life
- Are bright-eyed and alert
- Have a dry shiny coat
- The navel should be shrivelled up and dry with no discharge
- Should look happy and energetic.
- When standing they have a straight back and head is up

What to avoid

- Any calf dropping its head
- Reluctant to stand
- Arched back
- Dull eyes
- Calves with diarrhoea or white or green runny faeces, at 4 days old they should be yellow

but formed.

Don't get caught in the trap of buying unhealthy sickly calves because they are cheap or you feel

sorry for them; even experienced calf rearers find it hard to raise these. If you are not too sure of

what to look for take someone experienced with you to give you their opinion or buy off a

reputable stock agent. You should buy the best calves you can find, remember you will get what

you pay for.

