

Housing Calves

When you get your new calves home they should be placed in a warm, draught-free shelter.

Each calf needs 2 – 3 square metres of pen space and there shouldn't be more than 15 calves per pen. Make sure you do the calculations and have things organized before they arrive.

The shelter should;

- Have a north-opening side for ventilation
- Be twice as deep (long) as it is wide
- Have enough roof overhang at the front to avoid pen getting wet when it rains
- Be covered with a carpet of a thick, dry layer of sawdust, bark peelings or straw

Calves should have access to pasture during dry and sunny weather. After a week or two they can stay in the paddock as long as they have access to the shed in case of bad weather.

One of the biggest keys to successful calf rearing is scrupulously good hygiene. All feeding equipment and preparation equipment should be well washed after each feed with warm water and detergent then rinsed thoroughly.

If rearing more than one batch of calves in a year make sure bedding in the pen is changed and spray the pen (including walls and fittings), and feeding equipment with an antiviral disinfectant between each batch to prevent spread of disease.

Never mix different batches of calves from different sources that are less than a month old, especially whilst still housed indoors.

