

COMMERCE AND EMPLOYMENT DEPARTMENT

GUIDANCE FOR THE WELFARE OF CALVES

MADE UNDER SECTION 13(6) OF THE ANIMAL WELFARE (GUERNSEY) ORDINANCE, 2012

General

For the purpose of this guidance, calf means bovine animal that is less than 6 months of age.

Accommodation

Calves that are permanently or predominantly accommodated out of doors must be provided with a shelter (such as calf hut/hutch and an attached fenced pen).

Other than on the advice of a veterinary surgeon, calves that are over 8 weeks of age must not be kept alone unless there are no other bovine animals on the holding.

Where two or more bovine animals, including the calf, are kept on a holding they must be able to see and have tactile contact with at least one other bovine animal. This may be the dam initially and then other calves once it is separated from the dam.

Shelters

As a general guide the width of any individual hutch for a calf should be at least equal to the height of the calf at the withers, measured in the standing position, and the length must be at least equal to the body length of the calf, measured from the tip of the nose to the pin bones, multiplied by 1.1.

For calves kept in groups, the unobstructed space available for each calf should be at least –

- 1.5 m² for each calf with a live weight of less than 150 kg,
- 2 m² for each calf with a live weight of 150 kg or more but less than 200 kg, and
- 3 m² for each calf with a live weight of 200 kg or more.

Each calf must be able to stand up, lie down, turn around, rest and groom itself in a normal posture and without hindrance.

Shelters should -

- be of sound construction and not contain materials, fixtures, fittings or equipment that represents a hazard to cattle,

- provide ventilation that prevents drafts and the build up of humidity and condensation,
- in the case of hutches, be capable of being thoroughly cleansed and disinfected and be anchored to prevent them from being blown over in high winds,
- be placed to provide protection from adverse weather with the entrance away from the prevailing wind, and
- Not be placed on steeply sloping ground or in areas that are prone to waterlogging.

Bedding and Lying Area

Calves must, at all times, have a lying area that is clean and dry.

Bedding should generally be provided unless, in the case of calves over 8 weeks of age, the pasture on which they are kept is well drained. This is likely to only be the case between 30th April and 1st November.

Feeding

New born calves must receive bovine colostrum within six hours of birth and must continue to receive colostrum for at least the first 48 hours after birth.

Weaned calves must be fed a enough food to keep them in good health and vigour and the diet that is provided and amount that is fed must take account of their age and species. The diet must also contain sufficient iron to maintain calves in good health.

Calves over 2 weeks old must have a minimum daily ration of fibrous food of 100g and this amount should be increased as they get older so that the minimum daily ration at 20 weeks old is 250g.

If grass pasture is the only source of fibrous food it will be insufficient to meet the calf's requirements for fibre if, for example, the grazing is poached or contaminated with faeces, in which case supplementary fibrous food must be provided.

Where calves are house together, care must be taken to ensure that each animal has equal access to food.

Any feed that is provided must be wholesome and must not contain any substances that are harmful to calves.

Calves under 8 weeks of age must be fed at least twice a day.

Drinking Water

Calves must be provided with enough fresh, potable water for them to remain hydrated in the prevailing environmental conditions. Moisture from grazing alone must not be the only source of water that is provided.

As a guide, water should be provided twice daily and calves that are over 20 weeks of age require an average of 26 litres per day.

Streams and ponds are not a suitable source of water for calves.

Calves must be provided fresh, palatable drinking water at all times in hot weather conditions (when the air temperature in the shade is greater than 20°C) and when they are ill.

Contact with other Cattle

New born calves must have contact with the dam and once separated, other than calves that are isolated for health reasons, must have visual and tactile contact with other calves. This may be achieved by providing shelters that have common sides.

Tethering

Calves under the age of 6 months must not be tethered other than for activities such as -

- feeding milk,
- veterinary inspection, or
- the administration of veterinary medicines,

and they may be restrained using a head collar and lead rope or yoke, and only for as long as it is necessary to undertake such activities and no longer.

Muzzling

Calves must not be muzzled.

Health and Hygiene

Calves should be inspected by the owner or keeper at least twice a day.

Sick and injured animals must be isolated and if they do not respond to first aid or any immediate treatment must, as soon as practicable, received veterinary treatment.

A hutch or pen used to isolate a calf must have minimum dimensions of 1m by 1.8m.

Equipment and utensils must be regularly cleaned and disinfected.

Shelters, equipment and utensils must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected and shelters moved to a new position before they are re-used.

Animal waste and uneaten or spoiled food must be removed from shelters and pens daily and to avoid attracting flies or rodents.

Shelter kept on an impervious surface must be removed and the vacate area thoroughly cleaned and before it is reused as a site for a shelter.

Cold Weather

If the environmental temperature falls below 15°C, in the case of calves less than one month age, and 10°C in the case of older calves, action must be taken to protect calves.

Such action should take to form of -

- providing coats or rugs (calves may require a rug for the first 2 weeks of life if they are born between October and June or if they are between 2 weeks and 1 month old from December to March), or
- providing extra bedding, or
- building a temporary wind-break (such as a Corey Cross or a shelter constructed from bales), or
- moving calves to a building (particularly dams with new-born calves) (and a suspended heat lamp could be used to provide additional heat).

When the weather is cold calves must be provided with additional food (an increase of at least 20%).

Hot Weather

If the environmental temperature is greater than 25°C, in the case of calves less than one month age, and 20°C in the case of older calves, action must be taken to protect calves.

Such action should take to form of -

- providing either natural or artificial shade, or
- providing ventilation, or

- wetting or misting with them water.

When the weather is hot calves must be provided with water at all times.

Severe Weather Planning

Owners or keepers of calves should plan for the care of calves when there is a forecast of severe weather and should take action to protect their animals before the severe weather occurs. Typically a 'red' (take action) severe weather warnings issued by Meteorological (Met) Office for snow and/or ice is notice of an impending extreme weather event and owners or keepers of calves should take action at their earliest opportunity.

Owners or keepers that require assistance with protection measures before the arrival of severe weather or during such weather can contact the States Veterinary Officer (234567), Civil Protection Volunteers (Graham Williams 07781 129502 / 717337) or the Guernsey Police (725111).