



SEMEX JERSEYS WORK

New Mexico Herd Has Annual 2.78% Calf Death Loss

Aaron Henderson, US Jersey Specialist

Growth in the US dairy industry in recent years has centered in the southwest, with many California dairymen looking east to New Mexico and Texas. California dairymen are familiar with the climate and appreciate the reduced environmental and economic pressures.



s Dutch Valley Herdsman Todd Silveira

Three years ago Dan Visser and Sons moved their entire herd along with herdsman Todd Silveira to Clovis, New Mexico. Dutch Valley currently houses 5,000 milk cows in open lots in this southwest desert, dealing with weather conditions that at times can be quite extreme and very harsh.

In one 24-hour period it is not uncommon to have high temperatures in the upper to mid 80's and a nighttime low in the mid 30's. Along with the heat and cold comes wind gusts which commonly reach upwards of 50 miles per hour.

Not great calf raising weather, yet this purebred Jersey operation has had a calf death loss of only 2.78% in 2008. This figure is phenomenal for any dairy, but remarkable under these extreme weather conditions and within herd of this size and scale.

"Calf raising starts for us during the dry cow period," says Silveira. "We

continue through the dry period through birth and to weaning with strict protocols on vaccinations, proper amounts of colostrums and focused weight gain for appropriate weaning weights."

When asked to expand on their protocols that have led to success, Todd shared that cows are given Endovac and Ultrabac 7 at drying, and then at 255 days in calf the cows are vaccinated again with Endovac and also Triangle 9.

"Calves are taken from the maternity pen about 30 minutes after birth, navels are then dipped, and the calf is vaccinated and fed colostrum," Todd says. "The calves will receive two quarts of colostrum every six hours for their first 24 hours."

At birth calves are vaccinated with both Calf Guard and TSV 2.

"Calves are housed in elevated pens in the maternity barn for the first 48 hours and then moved to our calf area. In the winter, each calf wears a calf coat for the first 30 days of their existence."

"The calf area consists of poly dome hutches with sand bedding and if needed cotton burs are used for warmth," continues Todd.

Calves are again vaccinated at 42 days with Pyramid 10, Ultrabac 7, and Endovac. Then 18 days later they

are vaccinated with TSV 2, Pyramid 10, Ultrabac 7, and Endovac.

"Calves are weaned at 67 days, but will stay in the hutches for a total of 95 to 100 days. Then they are moved to group pens. Calves are fed free choice 20% Complete Calf Pellet from birth until four months of age. Protein levels are ran on all when they are moved to the calf area."

The milk and colostrum are pasteurized and employees of Dutch Valley run E-Coli counts twice a week on the colostrum to ensure proper handling, and additional counts are run on the pasteurizer weekly.

The Dutch Valley management team believes in good quality genetics and attributes aggressive growth in their calves to their sire selection criteria.

"We select bulls that give us milk and type. Not show winning type. We do not show our cows, but type that will make a cow that will last in our environment," Todd explains.

"We need a cow with a good, youthful udder and a great body, that is sound in the foot and leg. Some cows walk a long way to the parlor. I like cows that are open in the front end,

kind of hearty, with a flat bone and a great open rib and a deep body."

"They have to be able to easily convert feed to milk. The back end of the cow has to have thurl width, square to make plenty of room for high and wide rear udders to fit."

"Calf raising starts for us during the dry cow period."



"To accomplish this, the bulls we use are Semex sires 0200JE00989 BW Country, 0200JE00303 SHF Centurion Sultan, 0200JE988 BW Blaise, and 0200JE9003 Millstream Bellringer and we actively support the Semex Premier Program by using 100 units of almost every young sire in the program."

"We are very pleased with the results we see in our 2 Yr Old pens. We have daughters of 0200JE00989 BW Country, 0200JE00990 Sunset Canyon RP Militia, and 0200JE00303 SHF Centurion Sultan. They show the

conformation and the milk we were looking for when we decided to use these bulls nearly three years ago," says Todd.

"We're happy with the Semex Premier Program and plan to continue to partner together."

"We're seeing the results we want. Semex sires work here."

Dairying is tough everywhere and with the current difficult economic forecast in the US, Semex encourages dairymen to seek out programs such the Semex Premier Program to increase profitability without sacrificing genetic gain.

DUTCH VALLEY CALF PROTOCOL



Dry Cow Vaccination Protocol:

The following is given at drying:

- Endovac
- Ultrabac 7

The following is given when dry cow is moved to close up pens at approximately 255 days carrying calf:

- Endovac
- Triangle 9

Vaccination Protocol for Calves:

The following is given at birth:

- Calf Guard
- TSV 2

Given at 42 days:

- Pyramid 10
- Ultrabac 7
- Endovac

Given at 60 days:

- TSV-2
- Pyramid 10
- Ultrabac 7
- Endovac

- Newborn calves receive 1 bottle of colostrum every 6 hours for the first 24 hours.
- Calves are fed pasteurized whole milk for the first 67 days and free choice 20% complete calf pellet until 4 months of age.
- Calves are weaned off milk at 67 days.
- Current death loss is 2.78%
- 5000 cows

Calves are pulled 30 minutes after birth, navels are dipped, and calf is vaccinated and fed colostrum. Calves are housed in elevated pens in maternity barn for two days, and then moved to calf area. During the winter calves are put in the calf warmer after they are fed their first bottle of colostrum. Each calf then wears a calf jacket for about 30 days. In the calf area, calves are housed in poly dome hutches with sand bedding, if needed cotton burrs are used for warmth. Calves are weaned at 67 days, but stay in the hutches until 95 to 100 days. They are then moved to group pens.

Protein levels are run on all calves when they are moved to the calf area. E-Coli counts are run twice a week on colostrum to ensure proper handling. Counts on the pasteurizer are run once a week.