



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

SMR 11: Welfare Standards for the Protection of Calves

January 2017

The aim of these requirements is to protect the welfare of calves by setting a minimum standard for their care and husbandry. They apply to all keepers of calves, in addition to the requirements for the welfare of farmed animals (please note SMR 13).

Main requirements

The following minimum standards have to be met when rearing or fattening calves:

- All housed calves must be inspected at least twice a day, and outdoor calves at least once a day;
- Calves must not be tethered unless for a short period to facilitate feeding of milk/milk substitute;
- For individual calf pens:
 - Pen length shall be at least equal to the body length of the calf when standing, to allow it to stand, turn, lie down and groom itself;
 - Pen width shall be at least equal to the height of the calf when standing.
- Calves older than 8 weeks should not be penned singly, unless a vet has advised that it needs to remain in isolation or is under treatment;
- Calf accommodation must be clean and disinfected as appropriate, have bedding and be lit by natural or artificial means;
- Calves should have:
 - Colostrum within 6 hours of life;
 - Sufficient feed appropriate to their age;
 - Access to clean drinking water at all times.
- Calves require at least two liquid feeds per day to gain sufficient nutrition. Only when solid feed can be properly digested should it be considered a 'feed'. Roughage should be provided from two weeks of age.

Field checks

- Check that calf housing meets the requirements above.
- Check the farmer has a copy or access to the Welfare Code for cattle.

Good Practice

- Follow guidelines given in the Welfare Code for housing calves.
- Milk from cows tested and found to be bTB reactors, or inconclusive, should **NOT** be fed to calves.
- Milk from infected cows may only be fed to animals on the same farm after suitable heat treatment.
- Provided milk from TB infected cows (reactors or clinical cases) is fed only to animals on the same farm after appropriate heat treatment (pasteurisation will kill *Mycobacterium bovis*) the livestock keeper is compliant with EU rules.
- If calves are reared in a system where milk is provided by artificial means, their feed intake should be closely monitored. If calves have a reduced or slower feed intake, this is often an early sign of disease.
- Sick or injured calves must be isolated in suitable accommodation where appropriate with dry comfortable bedding.

For further information please contact:

Animal and Plant Health Agency

See 'Useful Contacts' factsheet within this pack

www.gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/ahw/animalwelfare/livestockwelfare