







# What's important for the calf's environment?

Best practice farms provide clean, comfortable and enriched indoor & outdoor environments to support the social and physical development of calves.

Good practice  
Best practice

- Offer a variety of pleasurable feed-stuffs to weaned calves. 
- Provide cow-calf contact until weaning with either the dam or a foster cow. 
- Feed 20% of body-weight in liquid milk/replacer over at least 4 feeds/day. 
- Provide ample space (*min. 3m<sup>2</sup>/calf*) with daily access to an exercise area (*min. 10m<sup>2</sup>/calf*). 
- Offer calves pasture access in a sheltered dry location when weather conditions allow. 
- Provide a warm environment 12-22°C for neonatal calves and 10-20°C for older calves. 

- Use feeding equipment which enables active and frequent natural feeding behaviours e.g. straw racks. 
- Provide cow-calf contact or a system that enables natural feeding behaviour without competition from other calves. 
- Provide a warm and dry environment with ample space and designated areas for feeding, resting, exploration and play. 
- Separate areas for resting, feeding and exercise in pens (*indoors*). 

- Ensure 1 feeding source per calf (e.g. teat dispenser or nipple bucket) without competition. 
- Use infra-red lamps or calf jackets for cold calves (*indoors*). 
- Create a comfortable lying area, with soft rubber flooring and deep straw bedding (*indoors*). 

# Calves



**Nutrition**



**Environment**






**Behaviour**



**Health**



- Raise calves with their dam or a foster cow until behavioural weaning. 

- Provide straw bales for enrichment while enabling calves to hide from bullies. 
- Raise calves with their dam or foster cow, or in paired or group housing systems. Use different types of enrichment to support good mental and physical development of calves. 
- Create a dedicated hospital area for sick calves and a medical area for procedures and recovery of healthy calves. Use cuddle boxes in cow-calf contact systems to isolate sick calves. Employ high biosecurity standards to help protect calf health and welfare. 



- Use at least 2 types of enrichment to support good mental and physical development of calves. 
- Use paired or group housing for calves (*max. 8*) of a similar age, size and health status. 
- Use dedicated clean equipment, clothes and boots when caring for calves. 
- Use cuddle boxes in cow-calf contact systems to isolate sick calves. 
- Disinfect empty pens and leave for 2 weeks before reuse. 