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**INTEL**

## These farms feed calves 3x



by Abby Bauer, Associate Editor

Calves with maintained health and growth as young animals will deliver greater performance and value as cows. Industry research shows this, but often the most valuable insights come from dairy producers themselves.

At the Dairy Calf and Heifer Association annual conference last week, a panel of producers discussed what they do to enhance calf productivity. One management strategy all three farms implemented was three-times-a-day calf feeding.

Laura Daniels from Heartwood Farm, a Cobb, Wis., dairy milking 300 Jerseys, had read an article featuring a study where 97 percent of calves fed 3x made it to the first lactation, compared to 80 percent of the calves fed 2x. At that point, she said they “stopped making excuses” and added the extra feeding.

Starting on Day 3, they feed 2 quarts of pasteurized milk three times daily to their calves. Daniels said that people often don’t believe Jerseys can eat that much, but she has found that they do.

For Lane Sollenberger, general manager of Dream Farms, a 10,000-head heifer operation in Newburg, Pa., once they started with 3x feeding, they didn’t look back. He pointed out the added value of having people spend time with the calves and make observations during that extra feeding.

Their calves, mostly Holsteins, receive a milk replacer feeding three times per day starting on Day 2.

Brett Barlass of Yosemite Dairy, a Hilmar, Calif., Jersey farm milking 1,800 cows, said they began feeding 3x from the start when they decided to raise their own calves in 2012. On their farm, calves are fed pasteurized milk 3x beginning on Day 3.

Barlass noted that giving that extra feeding helps calves fight through scours. “It works great,” he said.

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