

News Column

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For Release 03/14/22
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KEEPING CALVES HEALTHY

If I could order the weather during calving season, I would choose a temperature between 30 and 45 degrees, no wind, and probably no rain or snow. I hate to nix the moisture, but calves sure do better when they aren't wet.

While this year's up and down temperatures don't seem to have caused a lot of calf health problems, it might be different if we had rain, snow, or just muddy calving pens. Most would agree that last week's snow was a blessing, and I doubt it bothered calves that were more than a couple of days old, but dryness does have some advantages.

I suppose a constant 60 or 70 degrees would be good for calving too, but that's not going to happen when we calve in the spring. The best we can hope for is about 30 degrees – cold enough to keep the ground solid during wet springs, and also cold enough for calves to stay healthy.

Maybe I'm off-base – I didn't dig for research to tell me the ideal calving temperature – but I like it kind of chilly. Make no mistake about what I'm saying though, I do not like WET and chilly.

I don't remember the exact year – it was the early 1980's – but I will always remember looking for calves during a wet April snowstorm so I could warm them up and dry them off in the cab of the pickup. That was during my days in Phillips County, a part of the state where April snows are a bit more common.

Since I don't get to choose the weather, the next best thing I can do is to invite you to attend the Riley County Livestock Association Spring Meeting on Thursday, March 31, where the topic will be "Keeping Calves Healthy". Dr. Bob Larson, DVM will be the featured speaker.

Dr. Larson is a professor of production medicine and is the Executive Director for Veterinary Medical Continuing Education in the College of Veterinary Medicine at Kansas State University.

Pinkeye, scours, and pneumonia are among the topics Larson is expected to cover. He will probably spend some time discussing treatment options, but I really expect him to spend more time on prevention,... talking about management practices that will keep calves healthy and growing.

The RCLA Spring Meeting will be held at the Fairview Church Fellowship Hall, located at 12380 Fairview Church Road, Riley. The church is two miles north of Riley on Highway 24, just across the intersection from Riley County High School.

The meeting will start at 6:30 p.m., with supper catered by The Farmhouse in Riley. There is a \$5 per person charge to attend, with the remainder of the cost covered by sponsors. As I write this, sponsors who have committed to help include Valley Vet, Union State Bank of Olsburg and Randolph, Frontier Farm Credit, Kan Equip, and Allen Meat Market.

Reservations are required and can be made online at www.riley.ksu.edu. Or, you can call the Riley County Extension Office at 785/537-6350. The meeting is on Thursday, March 31 and reservations are needed by Monday, March 28.

If you have questions, you can reach me at the Riley County Extension Office at 785/537-6350. Or, you can send e-mail to gmcclore@ksu.edu.

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