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North West Provincial Government
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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT ANIMAL SCIENCE DIVISION

WEAN SELECTION DEMO DAY: MACHAVIE EXPERIMENTAL FARM

20 JULY 2022

KHOMOTSO KGASWANE

SUPPLEMENTATION DURING WEANING



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Supplementing weaned calves

- At wean it is the producer's responsibility to help make the transition as smooth as possible
- Improper weaning can result in poor growth, which may stay with the animal through its life (Stress – maternal separation, new environment and new social structures and unfamiliar feedstuff)
- The transition from grass and milk to total mixed rations
- If they make it through this transition it means they will pay back in terms of ultimate lifetime performance through to production cycle



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INTRODUCTION

- As many calves are raised in grassland environment, getting them used to feed bunks is important
- If they do not eat properly there's an increased risk of diseases (pneumonia, diarrhoea and respiratory)
- Feeding them supplements before weaning helps ease the stress levels – creep feeding
- As the cow may eat most feed but the calf is getting used to the trough and eventually will do as the mother does



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Positioning the feed

- Put hay that calves are familiar with on top of the ration one day 1 – 3
- On fourth day increase the ration but not the hay, at this time put ration on top of hay
- The from day 7 -14 reduce or remove the hay so they can stay completely on the ration
- The goal is to improve the calf body
- Do not offer them too much -which may cause pot bellies and bloat and lead to death



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The rations

- Weanlings are often used to feedstuffs such as grass and hay which are not rich in nutrients
- Pre-conditioning the calves is very important – not only in nutrition but with vaccinations as well
- Rations and feedstuffs used by producer after weaning to fatten are different
- But the main is to make sure there is enough protein
- Wean calves were supplemented (creep fed) they turn to eat and grow faster than the counterparts that were not supplemented – but consider

economics



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The rations

- Pre-weaned calf nutrition depends heavily on the success of the Dam and the health of the pasture
- Therefore a careful calculation of the economics is recommended
- Supplementing calves in the systems where calves are to be retained for backgrounding or heifer replacement is not recommended because there is no sale price to make up the cost of supplemental feed



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