

Livestock purchasing guide

VEAL CALVES

New calves coming onto your farm may bring unwanted diseases with them. Disease outbreaks can be costly to a farm's bottom line, so to minimize your risk, here's what to look for when buying new livestock.



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BUYING

- Purchase calves from as few sources as possible. Animals that have been commingled have potentially been exposed to many different pathogens that they can bring into your herd.
- Be aware of the disease status and biosecurity practices of the dairy farms from which you source calves.
- Know the health status of calves coming onto your farm.
- Keep records of the calves you buy - record their health status, point of origin and point of purchase.

MOVEMENT AND TRANSPORTATION

- Do not transport unfit animals.
- Ensure the calves you purchase have dry navels and that they are old enough to be transported.
- Reduce stress during transport – this boost calves' disease resistance.
- Clean and disinfect transport trucks and trailers in between loads or ensure that your transporter has an appropriate protocol in place.

INTRODUCTION AND ISOLATION

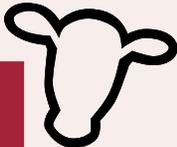
- When receiving new calves, sort them according to size and weight to reduce stress and make it easier for them to adjust to their new environment.
- Treat and vaccinate calves of unknown health status when they arrive.
- Observe new animals' health status and their response to the new farm site.
- Keep calves in dry, comfortable and clean environments to avoid development of scours and to give them time to acclimatize.
- Isolate calves that you suspect may be sick from the other animals and treat them.
- Implement enhanced biosecurity between sick pens and quarantine areas and the rest of your herd to avoid disease spread.



HEALTH AND HOUSING

- Adequate ventilation and neonatal care of very young calves is needed to reduce stress and avoid direct infection.
- Avoid direct contact between calves – whether housed individually or in adjacent pens.
- Protect feed and water sources from urine, manure and other contaminants, including cats and rodents.
- Ensure all calves have equal access to feed and water. Calves that can't eat or drink in sufficient quantities are more susceptible to disease.
- Manage water, air and feed quality to help keep disease at bay.
- Properly sanitize pails, drenching tubes, balling guns and needles, especially when moving between healthy and sick animals.
- Implement a vaccination and parasite control program in your herd.
- Control rodents and insect populations to keep them from spreading disease.

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For more information, visit
www.agbiosecurity.ca or contact
the Ontario Veal Association at
info@livestockalliance.ca or 519-824-2942.

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