

Difficult Births Results In Reduced Immunity Of Newborn Calves

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Losses due to difficult births go beyond a dead calf or dam. Calves with difficult births, or dystocia, are apt to have reduced immunity compared to those born without difficulty because they receive inadequate colostrum from their dams. In lots of the cases, the females that are likely to have calving problems are first-calf heifers, which are also likely to be thin in body condition, compounding the problem. Calves enduring difficult births are also those that have a challenge rising and searching for the dam's udder. These calves are also less efficient in absorbing the im-

munoglobulin from the colostrum.

In addition, these calves are more susceptible to stress of birth and will experience greater respiratory and digestive problems and perform at a reduced rate as future brood cows or as steers in the feedlot and carcass value. These are real losses but are not usually noticed, whereas death is very easily seen.

This information should be especially beneficial to producers when selecting bulls to breed replacement heifers to ensure ease of calving. Δ

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