

Some Basics On Milk Replacers

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Most producers are not thrilled with feeding milk replacers. With the exception of dairy operations, this usually is a sign something did not go as planned. With that in mind, milk replacers come in a wide range of protein and fat content. The type and quality of ingredients that determine the protein and fat content of milk replacers can also vary considerably. Protein is typically the most expensive ingredient. Protein derived from milk products are typically more digestible and readily available to the young calf versus protein derived from plant products. Suggested nutrient content of milk replacers is minimum 20 percent crude protein and 20 percent fat for calves up to two months of age. The high fat content is es-

pecially needed during the cold and wet times of the year. If the appropriate amount of energy is not supplied, the calf must utilize the fat stores it has for energy. Fat deposits in young calves are minimal and once they are used up the calf can become further stressed and more susceptible to disease and weight loss. Remember to do your homework and compare feed tags, the milk replacer that is less expensive may end up being the most costly if adequate levels of digestible nutrients are not supplied.

References: Barry Steevens, MU Extension State Dairy Specialist and Feeding the Newborn Dairy Calf, Publication CAT UD013. Δ

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