

# Feeding Calves for Veal

H. P. Adams and M. Gamroth

Veal is produced in the United States primarily from surplus male calves of the larger dairy breeds.

Veal is usually defined as a calf raised entirely on milk or milk replacer until it attains a body weight of 250 to 350 pounds. Calves should gain weight rapidly so that a small layer of subcutaneous fat is produced, and the meat should be pink.

Veal is highly desired, especially by people whose origins are in southern Europe. It will bring a premium price in the summer because its low fat content makes it desirable in hot weather.

Veal production is divided into two types of operations. In the first, only a few calves are raised on surplus milk. These calves usually are consumed by the producer's family or sold to neighbors.

The second type of operation is commercial, where many calves are purchased and kept in individual pens in controlled environment housing. These calves are usually individually fed with specially formulated milk replacers.

In some cases, they are marketed by the company that supplies the feed. This type of operation can make money for the operator, but it is not without risks. Because of small margins, the death of a few calves will consume the profit quickly.

Give special attention to the following factors:

1. Calf selection from the larger dairy breeds is the usual practice. Avoid sick calves. These can often be picked out by sunken eyes or a rough hair coat, evidence of dehydration from diarrhea or scours. Take the temperature of every calf before purchasing it. Do not purchase any calves with temperatures either 1.0° above or below 101.5° F.

2. Thoroughly clean and disinfect facilities for each new calf. Clean, dry quarters with adequate ventilation are a must for veal calves. Cleanliness and sanitation will prevent a disease cycle between groups of calves.
3. Feed calves whole milk or a milk replacer formulated from dairy products and animal fats. Young calves do not digest efficiently such products as blood flour, fish flour, soybean meal, oat flour, and other animal and vegetable products. Most milk replacers for veal have a low level of antibiotic stimulate growth. Several companies market a special milk replacer for veal production.
4. Watch the health of calves closely. They must make rapid gains to be marketed as fancy veal; prevent sickness or even a few days off feed. Isolate calves that eat slowly or do not clean up their feed or have scours and/or sunken eyes showing dehydration. Take their temperatures to determine whether such calves have an infectious disease. With the advice of a veterinarian, use the correct treatment to alleviate the problem. If you inject or feed antibiotics, be sure to observe the withdrawal period before marketing the calf. Dust or spray calves as necessary to control flies and other external parasites.
5. Marketing veal calves may be difficult in some areas. The demand is usually highest in and near large cities, but processing plants for Oregon veal are in California. Veal usually brings its highest price in summer.

Table 1 shows a feeding schedule for fancy veal. Recommendations may vary between companies supplying the special milk replacers.

**Table 1. Feeding Schedule for Fancy Veal†**

Days on feed	Pounds of milk or milk replacer/day
1- 4	4
5- 8	4.5
9-12	5
13-14	5.5
15-16	6
17-18	6.5
19-21	7
22-24	7.5
25-27	8
28-30	8.5
31-33	9
34-36	9.5
37-39	10
40-42	10.5
43-45	11
46-48	11.5
49-51	12
52-54	12.5
55-57	13
58-60	13.5
61-63	14
64-66	14.5
67-69	15
70-72	15.5
73-99	16

† This is a guide and will need adjusting for individual animals depending on body weight. If a milk replacer is used, follow directions for mixing and feeding.

*H.P Adams, Extension dairy specialist emeritus; and Michael Gamroth, Extension dairy specialist, Oregon State University.*



It is important to watch the calves closely and reduce the feed if the calf does not eat it all. Individual feeding from a pail is recommended.

Tables 2 and 3 are forms for recording income and expenses to analyze your business. Keeping records assures that the business is progressing in the direction you wish. Records will be useful in your business association with banks or others.

**Table 2. Individual Calf Record**

	Estimate	Your costs
Cost of calf .....	\$ 75.00	\$ _____
Cost of milk or milk replacer .....	95.00	\$ _____
Other costs:		
Reserve for losses and culls ...	10.00	\$ _____
Medication .....	4.00	\$ _____
Marketing/trucking, .....	5.50	\$ _____
Utilities .....	5.00	\$ _____
Building (insurance, taxes) .....	7.00	\$ _____
Equipment .....	2.25	\$ _____
Interest .....	4.75	\$ _____
	<b>TOTAL \$208.50</b>	
Return for 330-lb veal calf		
@ 80¢/lb .....	264.00	\$ _____
Estimated cost of 330-lb calf ...	208.50	\$ _____
	\$ 55.50	\$ _____

**Table 3. Production Report**

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**Producer** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_

No. of calves started \_\_\_\_\_ Date started \_\_\_\_\_

No. of calves sold \_\_\_\_\_ Date sold \_\_\_\_\_

Avg. starting weight \_\_\_\_\_ Days fed \_\_\_\_\_

Avg. weight gained \_\_\_\_\_ Avg. selling weight \_\_\_\_\_

Lbs. of feed fed \_\_\_\_\_ Cost per lb. \_\_\_\_\_

**Income**

Calves sold ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Other income ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Total income \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Operating Expenses**

Cost or value of calves ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Cost of feed ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Medicines and vet fees . . . . . \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Marketing ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Labor ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Interest ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Utilities (heat, electricity, water) ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Building (insurance, taxes, interest, depreciation) ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Equipment. .... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total expenses \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**NET RETURN \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

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Extension Service, Oregon State University, Corvallis, O.E. Smith, director. This publication was produced and distributed in furtherance of the Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914. Extension work is a cooperative program of Oregon State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Oregon counties.



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