

OBSERVE

HEALTHY

SICK

Appetite

Strong suckle
Ready for meals, finished meals

Poor suckle response
Unfinished meals, drinks slower

Manure

Firm to soft, holds pile
Not too dry, brown to light brown
Normal odour
Clean tail

Increased frequency, increased quantity, watery, pasty, clay-like, yellow, white, green, bloody, contains mucous

Posture and demeanour

Reactive to people and other calves
Lays with front legs tucked under its chest
Sits up straight
Stands upright, with equal weight in all legs

Depressed, lethargic, indifferent, cannot hold its head up, twitches, has its front legs outstretched, difficulty rising, abnormal leg positioning, swollen joints, lameness, injury, lump in mouth

Eyes, ears, nose, and coat

Eyes: Prominent, bright, clear
Ears: Pricked position
Nose: Clean, moist
Coat: Shiny, smooth, clean, dry

Eyes: Dull, sunken, discharge
Ears: Droopy, cold to touch
Nose: Discharge, frothy, mucous, dry
Coat: Dull, matted, damp

Navel

Cord soft, thin and non-painful

Hot, hard, or painful (kicks at the navel, kicks or struggles when navel is touched)

CHECK

Hydration

Skin flattens immediately when pinched

Skin is tented for two seconds or more

Rectal temperature

Newborn: 38.5 to 40.5°C (101.3 to 104.9°F)
< One year: 38.6 to 39.4°C (101.3 to 102.8°F)

Hypothermia: <37.8°C (100°F)
High temperature: >39.5°C (103°F)
Acute infection: 40.5 to 41°C (104.9°F to 105.8°F)

Breathing

Calm, even, respiratory rate
< One month: 24 to 36 breaths/minute
> One month: 15 to 30 breaths/minute

Shallow, laboured, rapid, uneven
Coughing, grunting, whistling

ACT

Work with a veterinarian to create protocols for monitoring and treating sick calves. Contact a veterinarian immediately if a calf is displaying severe signs of illness, or more than 10% of your herd is sick.

For more information:

CALF MANAGEMENT: DETECTING CALF DISEASE EARLY

Getting all your calves off to a healthy start!



VEAL Farmers of Ontario

