

RAISING BEEF-ON-DAIRY CATTLE WITH INTENT

As the use of beef genetics in dairy herds becomes more common, the question facing the industry isn't whether we can raise beef-on-dairy calves at scale – it's how we raise them, and why. Raising these calves "with intent" means approaching their care not as a byproduct of other systems but as a deliberate process with clear goals, ethical foundations and human connection. It's about doing right by the animal, the people involved in their care and the food system on which we all rely.

BEGINNING WITH THE END IN MIND

Calves raised with intent as part of a planned system have been successful. This starts with:

CLEAR OUTCOMES

Understanding the expected endpoint (terminal beef animal).

DEFINED PROTOCOLS

Feeding, housing and health programs matched to those goals.

STRATEGIC COORDINATION

Seamless transitions between dairy, calf ranch and feedyard partners.

Without intentional planning, calves fall through the cracks by underperforming in productivity, getting sick or failing to meet quality expectations. Raising with intent helps close those gaps.



Matching management to the calf

Calf care is complex, and providing workers with frameworks to support them in delivering the best care possible is critical. Needs of beef-on-dairy calves can be described by the following categories:

NUTRITION

Ensuring calves receive nutrients critical to their growth and health.

ENVIRONMENT

Supplying thermal comfort and physical protection from the elements, predators, etc.

HEALTH

Providing prevention and treatment of injury and disease.

BEHAVIOR

Offering ability to express natural behaviors.

MENTAL STATES

Ensuring that calves don't experience distress or suffering, offer pain management.

For example, while each of the categories described above are essential for healthy, thriving calves, their needs could not be met without the people who devote countless hours to this work. Excellent calf care requires people, and the workforce trusted with important work also require support. Workers need training, tools and a clear understanding of not only how to consistently follow calf care protocols, but they also need to know *why*. When teams understand the "why" behind the work, attention to detail and animal wellbeing improves.



Every decision counts

The beef-on-dairy sector exemplifies the dedication of the industry to adapt to meet consumer demands for high-quality beef that is raised ethically and sustainably. Yet consumer pressures continue to evolve, offering an opportunity to elevate standards of care across the industry.

The standard: *Are we helping calves thrive?* Stewardship means more than meeting minimum requirements. It means designing systems that support full development – nutritionally, behaviorally and socially – anticipating the expectations of a marketplace that increasingly values both animal care and transparency. That might mean reevaluating how we define adequacy: not just survival, but satiety; not just prevention, but promotion of welfare

Raising beef-on-dairy cattle is not about overhauling tradition. It's about applying what we know with purpose.



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