of increased labor costs, which accounted for nearly one-half of the daily calf costs. Cost-averaged costs increased from 13% to 20% of total heifer rearing costs.

Here is the conclusion. There is often undue focus on cutting calf feeding costs. If lower-quality milk replacer, lower feeding levels or lower-cost calf starter were utilized, this might save $25-50 per calf. That would be only 15%, at the maximum, of the daily calf costs and only 2-3% of total heifer rearing costs. Poorer nutrition would then be provided to the most vulnerable and responsive animals on the dairy when the efficiency and return are the greatest. The best approach to cut calf period costs would be to reduce the weaning age from an average of eight to six weeks. This would reduce both the cost of the liquid feeding program and labor — the largest cost components of caring for and raising calves. Additionally, calves not fed a starter are utilized, this might save $25-50 per calf. That would be only 15%, at the maximum, of the daily calf costs and only 2-3% of total heifer rearing costs. Poorer nutrition would then be provided to the most vulnerable and responsive animals on the dairy when the efficiency and return are the greatest.

The best approach to cut calf period costs would be to reduce the weaning age from an average of eight to six weeks. This would reduce both the cost of the liquid feeding program and labor — the largest cost components of caring for and raising calves. Also, the calf would be in a better situation for maximizing growth and feed intake and performance. J. Dairy Sci. 91:1479-1482.

There are indications that even in this young calf age, critical mammary gland development is taking place. The best approach to cut calf period costs would be to reduce the weaning age from an average of eight to six weeks. This would reduce both the cost of the liquid feeding program and labor — the largest cost components of caring for and raising calves — and would not reduce calf performance. Also, the calf would be in a better situation for moving into a group and changing rations after two months of age. With good milk replacer and calf starter rations after two months of age, the calf would be in a better situation for maximizing growth and feed intake and performance. J. Dairy Sci. 91:1479-1482.

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In 60 seconds

BRAIN award: The Biomimic Research & Innovation Network (BRAIN) is a program created to support young and highly skilled scientists by fostering and funding groundbreaking research projects and innovative ideas in the area of animal nutrition and animal health. Biomim announced that the 2008 BRAIN Award was given to Dr. Koetas Mountzounis, a nutritional biochemist from the University of Athens, Greece.

Fiber analysis: FOSS announced that a new standard for determination of acid detergent fiber (ADF) and acid detergent lignin (ADL) content has been approved by CEN and ISO. The new standard (EN ISO 13906:2007) describes the use of refluxing apparatus and gives the FOSS Fibertec system as a suitable alternative. Maria Wiberg Wickman, FOSS product manager for Fibertec, said, “Finally, we have a worldwide standard for ADF and ADL. By using an officially approved method, you will get results that are valid on a worldwide basis.”

Dairy melamine: Romer Labs has launched a new, highly sensitive AgraQuant enzyme-linked immuno-sorbent assay test kit that is designed to meet the coming regulatory limits for melamine in food products. The European Food Safety Agency and the U.S. Food & Drug Administration have both concluded that the level of melamine in food products other than baby food should not exceed 2.5 mg/kg. Romer said its new AgraQuant Melamine Sensitive immunoassay has been validated for dairy products such as milk, milk powder, yogurt and yogurt drinks.

Calf starter: Land O’Lakes Purina Feed LLC announced that its AgraQuant-Calf Technology, a new calf starter technology, is now available in selected company calf starters in the Pacific Northwest, including Idaho, Oregon and Washington. AMPLI-Calf is a blend of unique, proprietary ingredients that help increase feed intake, weight gain and the overall height of young dairy calves.

A Healthy Immune System Starts with Good Nutrition.

A cow’s natural immune system needs to be healthy to fight the stresses of:

• Production and reproduction
• Molds and mycotoxins in feed
• Pathogens in the environment

Maintaining a healthy immune system can:

• Reduce somatic cell count
• Reduce cases of mastitis
• Reduce cases of metritis
• Reduce death loss and culls

Make sure your herd’s nutrition is optimal by feeding two ounces per cow per day of OmniGen-AF nutritional supplement.

Good Nutrition Is Right Up Your Feed Alley, and Ours.