Ref: Feedstuffs, November 9, 2015

**calving possible**

Lactation number, 11% of immediate pre-calving dam weight is lost at calving due to the weight of the calf and tissues/fluids lost from calving (Kertz et al., 1997).

**The Bottom Line**

This large-scale study of Quebec dairy heifer bodyweights and heights provides further evidence that achieving first calving at 24 months of age is quite doable. Whether that actually occurs is dependent on the growth and breeding program, taking periodic, scheduled measurements of weight and height and making feeding and management adjustments as needed.

**References**


**Top 2016 consumer trends outlined**

Technological advances are making life both easier and more fast-paced for Americans, who are trying to do more while seeking balance in their lives, according to Mintel.

In a new report, the research firm’s consumer trend consultants Stacy Glasgow and Jenny Zegler recently outlined what they believe will affect the U.S. market next year. Those trends include consumers’ increased interest in feeling more connected to what they’re buying and wanting to feel better about the companies they’re buying from.

Glasgow and Zegler listed what they see as the four key factors:

- **Trend 1: Balance or Bust.** Extreme behavior is becoming more commonplace as services and experiences proliferate, Glasgow said in the report. She cited TV binge watching as one example. She also pointed to growing interest in unlimited access to things for a set fee. For example, 21% of adults who attend live events would consider paying an annual subscription to a venue to see multiple events there.

  - **Trend 2: The Big Brand Theory.** “In the aftermath of the global financial crisis, consumers have exchanged the ‘bigger is better’ mantra for right-sized purchases and supporting small businesses,” Zegler wrote.

  That is reflected in the growth of local farmers markets and the popularity of websites such as Etsy, where consumers can buy handmade items from individuals.

  She said larger companies have the opportunity to create products that have a small business look and feel. “Regardless of the company’s size, genuine stories help to form relationships that give consumers the security that products are worthy of their investment and loyalty,” she explained.

  “Niche is no longer a limitation, nor is it an opportunity reserved for small companies. We’ve entered an era where the power of the story and the authenticity of the connection supersedes any lofty moral aspirations such as ‘shopping small,’” Zegler said.

- **Trend 3: Eye Get It.** The use of images in marketing — and for communicating in general — is reaching a new level, according to Glasgow. That includes Buyable Pins on the social media platform Pinterest, which lets people buy things that look desirable with the click of a button. More broadly, this visual trend includes the growing popularity of emojis in communicating.

  “Brands risk being left behind unless they find ways to leverage these universally quick and comprehensible visual media,” she said.

  For example, Domino’s Pizza tapped into visual media with the introduction of new text ordering capabilities, including emoji, this past June.

  - **Trend 4: Pride and Persona.** “Shifts in the traditional definitions of gender, race and other formerly standard demographics are redefining our culture,” Zegler said. “These changes are increasing the number of equality-focused consumers who expect that products, advertising and corporate policies will reflect the new reality of the population. Companies have responded by removing gender-based categories for children’s toys, such as dolls for girls and action figures for boys, and having same-sex couples and transgender celebrities appear in advertising.

  The notion of inclusion is increasingly important among the post-Millennial generation, Mintel found, noting that 83% of kids and 88% of teenagers agree that “it is important to accept people with different racial or ethnic backgrounds,” Zegler said.

  “It is likely that communication will grow beyond traditional perceptions of demographics and lead to more prominent reflections of seniors, people with disabilities, immigrants and the less educated,” she said.