

# FARMER GUIDE

## HOW MUCH TO FEED THE PRE-WEANED CALF



### Doubling the birth weight **MATTERS**

Doubling the calf's birth weight by the time they are weaned is important. A 40kg calf at birth should weigh at least 80kg at weaning, i.e. it must put on about 40kg by weaning.

Weaning calves based on their body weight, will help ensure a uniform group of calves at weaning and their post-weaning management will be much easier.

Try not to be left with a few smaller calves in the post-weaning group. It is much better to correct this before they are weaned.

	Age (days)	Weight (kg)
Birth	0	40
Weaning	56 to 60	80
Growth rate required	$(80\text{kg}-40\text{kg})/60 \text{ days} = 0.7 \text{ kg per day}$	

### Feeding enough **MATTERS**

Are you feeding your calves enough to double their birth weight by weaning?

Remember, grams of feed IN = grams of growth OUT.

A calf has a feed conversion rate of about 50% (i.e. 100g feed = 50g growth) during the milk feeding period. As a rough rule of thumb, a calf will need at least 700g milk powder per day plus ad libitum calf starter, to achieve a growth rate of about 0.7 kg per day\*.





### Expected Growth Rates

Expected growth rate based on feed intake for a calf fed 2.5L milk twice daily (milk replacer mixed at 125g/L) and calf starter, assuming a healthy calf housed in a clean warm environment are shown in the table:

Age (days)	Milk powder intake (g per day)	Potential starter intake (g per day) <sup>†</sup>	Total feed intake (g per day)	Expected growth rate (kg per day)
14	625	125	750	0.4
21	625	250	875	0.5
28	625	500	1125	0.6
35	625	750	1375	0.7
42	625	1200	1825	0.9
49	625	1500	2125	1.1
56	625	2000	2625	1.3

### Calculation **MATTERS**

Calculate the expected growth rate for calves on your farm by entering their milk powder and calf starter intakes:

Age (days)	Milk powder intake (g per day) <sup>1</sup>	Potential starter intake (g per day) <sup>2</sup>	Total feed intake (g per day) <sup>3</sup>	Expected growth rate (kg per day) <sup>4</sup>
14				
21				
28				
35				
42				
49				
56				

<sup>\*</sup>assuming a healthy calf aged 35 days and consuming 700g calf starter daily, housed in a clean warm environment under thermoneutral conditions (15-20°C).

<sup>†</sup>Jim Quigley, Calf Notes 2001. Actual calf starter intake on an individual farm will differ from the predicted figure – this data indicates the potential for intake in calves

<sup>1</sup> Milk powder intake: total volume of milk provided per calf per day multiplied by mixing rate (e.g. 5 litres x 125g per litre = 625g) <sup>2</sup> Starter intake: estimation of calf starter consumed per calf per day <sup>3</sup> Total feed intake: milk powder intake plus starter intake (e.g. 625g + 750g = 1375g) <sup>4</sup> Expected growth rate: total feed intake divided by 2 (e.g. 1375g / 2 = 0.69 kg per day)