

Blossom Trial

Objective

To generate calf performance data for heifer calves reared on Blossom Easymix Calf milk replacer.



Trial Site	Duchy College (Cornwall, England)
Calf type	Holstein heifers
Number of Calves	22 (born Sept to Oct 24)
Milk Powder	Blossom Easymix (23% crude protein, 18% fat; formulated with concentrated whey protein [Imunopro®], contains Butyrate and Gardion)
Feeder Type	Forster Technik Computerised Feeder

Management and Feed

Colostrum:

- Calves were tubed with 4L pooled colostrum (>22% Brix) within 4 to 6 hours of birth and then group housed (n=10 calves/pen) for 72 hours and fed colostrum / whole milk (2nd and 3rd milking) via an ad lib drum (~4L milk per feed)

Milk Replacer:

- On day 4, calves were introduced to a computerised feeder with two feed stations
- Calves were fed Blossom milk replacer mixed at 150g/L (150g powder + 850ml water = 1 litre of mixed milk) (Table 1)

Table 1. Milk Feeding Plan

Age period (days)	Days	CMR (g/litre)	CMR (litres/d)	CMR (g/d)
1 to 3	3	4L colostrum, followed by ad lib colostrum/whole milk		
4 to 10	7	150	5 to 7	750 to 1050
11 to 45	35	150	7	1050
46 to 66	21	150	7 to 2	1050 to 300

Total days on feeder=63d; Total milk volume, 380L; Total milk powder, 57.1kg

**Water and Dry Feed:**

- Fresh water, calf starter pellets (Calf nuts, 17% CP) and straw in racks was available ad-libitum (from day 4)

Weaning:

- Milk was reduced gradually from 7 to 2 litres over 21 days and calves were weaned at 66 days of age

Results

- Calves weighed on average 38kg at birth (range 28 to 58kg) and 83.1kg at weaning (range 73 to 110kg) (Table 2 and 3). Calves had a daily live weight gain (DLWG) of 0.70kg/d from birth to weaning and 0.73kg/d from 7 days to weaning (Table 2).
- After weaning, calves weighed on average 102kg at 12 weeks equating to a post weaning DLWG of 0.95kg/d (Table 2 and 3).

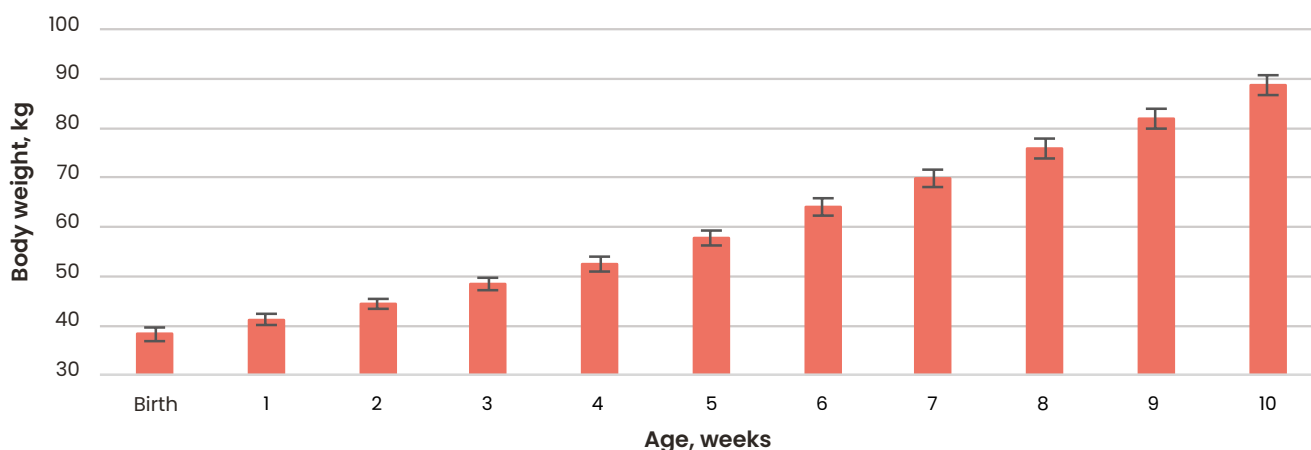
Table 2. Calf body weight and daily live weight gain (DLWG) pre and post weaning

	Mean \pm SE	Range
Birth weight, kg	38 \pm 1.4	28–58
Body weight at weaning, kg	83 \pm 1.9	73–110
DLWG birth to weaning, kg/d	0.70 \pm 0.02	0.6–0.9
DLWG 7d to weaning, kg/d	0.73 \pm 0.02	0.6–0.99
DLWG weaning to 12 weeks, kg/d	0.95 \pm 0.05	0.6–1.2

Table 3. Calf body weight (kg) up to 12 weeks of age

	Body weight, kg			Body weight, kg	
	Mean \pm SE	Range		Mean \pm SE	Range
Birth	38 \pm 1.4	28–58	Week 7	70 \pm 1.8	60–93
Week 1	41 \pm 1.2	34–55	Week 8	76 \pm 2.0	65–107
Week 2	44 \pm 1.1	38–58	Week 9	82 \pm 2.0	72–110
Week 3	49 \pm 1.2	40–66	Week 10	89 \pm 2.1	76–116
Week 4	52 \pm 1.4	44–74	Week 11	96 \pm 2 (n=20)	83–119
Week 5	58 \pm 1.6	47–81	Week 12	102 \pm 3 (n=18)	86–131
Week 6	64 \pm 1.7	53–88			

Figure 3. Calf body weight (\pm SE) up to 10 weeks of age



Calf Health

- Calf health was good; most calves received a faecal, nasal and eye score of 1 (normal) up to 10 weeks. Throughout the trial, only 4/22 calves (at weeks 3, 4 and 6) had a faecal score of 2 (loose) and no calf received a score of 3 (watery) at any point.

Cost per kg body weight gain:

Milk powder intake per calf, kg	57
Milk powder cost per 1000kg, £	2250
Total milk powder cost per calf, £	128.25
Mean body weight gain to 10 weeks, kg	45
Milk powder cost per kg BW gain, £	2.85

Based on March 2025 costings

Conclusions

- Calves fed a total of 57kg Blossom Easymix milk replacer over 63 days doubled their birth weight (38kg) by weaning, weighing on average 83kg at 66 days of age.
- Calves had good growth rates up to weaning of 0.73kg per day and continued to thrive post weaning with growth rates of 0.95kg per day.
- Calf health was good throughout the trial period.

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