

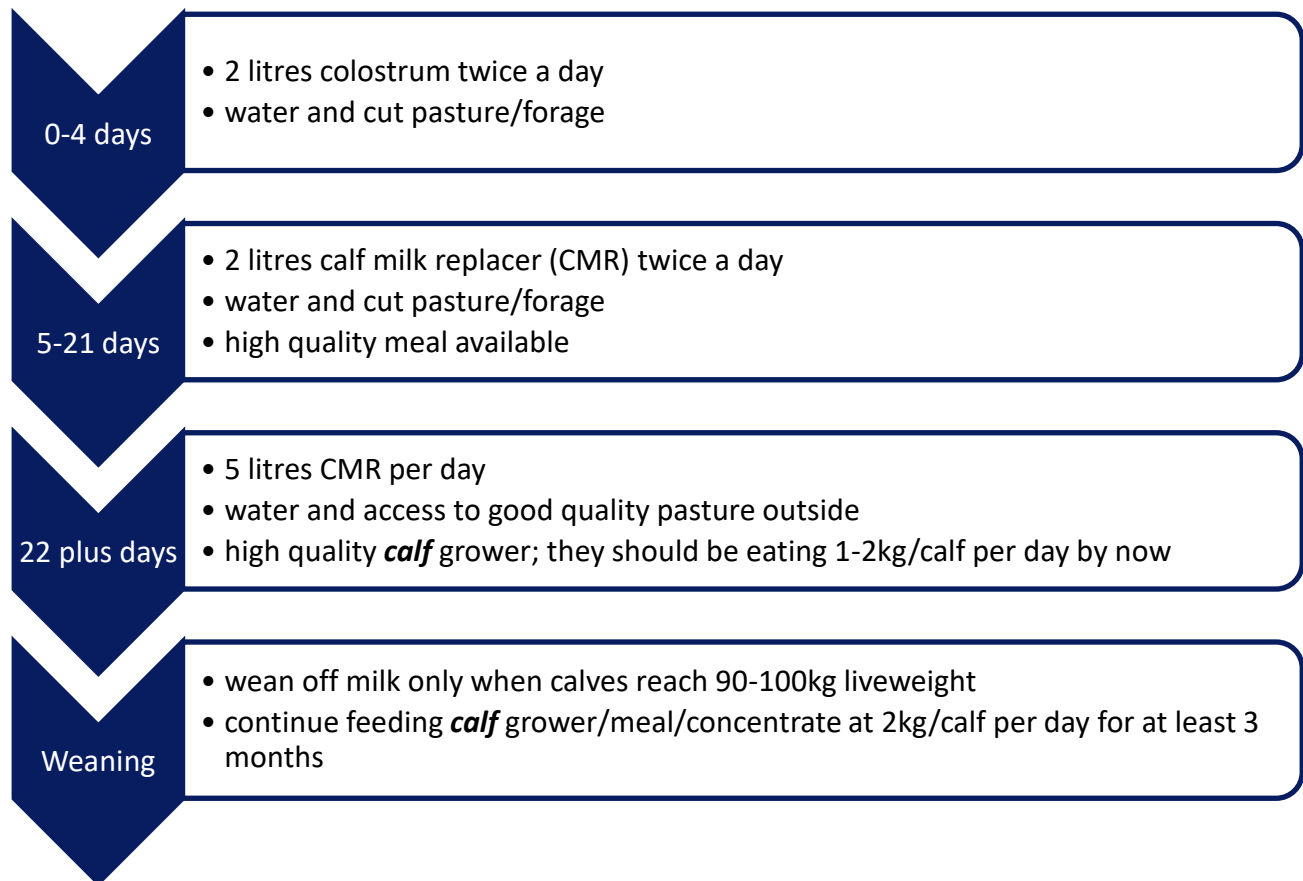


# Fiji DAIRYNOTE 1.2 Calf and Heifer Rearing – Birth to Weaning

## Good Practice Guide for Fiji Dairy Farmers

### Birth to weaning

- Bring cows that are close to calving near to the milking shed so they can be checked regularly (twice a day).
- After the first 4 days, feed the calf good quality calf milk replacer (CMR) at the recommended rate, i.e. 4 litres per day for the first 21 days and 5 litres per day after 21 days.
- From day 1, calves should have access to water and pasture/forage.
- From day 4-5, calves should have access to high quality calf grower.



- Grain is responsible for the development of rumen papillae, which is needed to digest feed. Forage is responsible for the size of the rumen and strength of the rumen wall. Both are needed to prepare the calf for weaning in pasture-based systems.



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### Calf Sheds

- Calves need shelter from cold wet weather, or very hot weather; they will grow faster when energy is not being spent on keeping warm or cool.
- Shelters can be made from materials found on the farm such as bamboo and tin for the roof.
- Bedding must be dry and warm; it can be made from round river stones, raised wood or wood chips.
- Sheds must be built on free-draining sites.
- On some farms, wood/concrete buildings may be available; however, concrete floors must have wood chips to a depth of at least 20cm to provide a warm dry bed.
- Concrete areas used for feeding must be able to be washed with water to remove faeces, urine and spilt milk/feed.



*A calf shed made from locally-available materials, such as bamboo and second-hand tin. Using treated pine posts for each of the four corners will make this shed last longer.*

### Vaccinations/disbudding/parasites

- At 6-8 weeks, use a 5 in 1 clostridial vaccine to prevent things like Blackleg, pulpy kidney tetanus, black disease and malignant oedema.
- A second vaccination is required 3 weeks later and at 12 months.
- Disbudding (removal of horn buds) should occur at 6-8 weeks.
- Bull calves to be kept as steers should be castrated within 7 days; rubber rings are recommended.
- Deworming must occur at least monthly once calves have access to pasture; alternate different drenches to avoid resistance building up.