

Calf coats

All of us have heard of calf coats. Many of us have seen them in use but only a few of us have actually used them. What are they and what are the pros and cons of using them?



What are calf coats

They are calf-size coats. Often they fasten in place with straps and/or ties. They are made of insulating-type fabrics such as wool, polyester blends and insulating foams. Producers prefer those that are machine washable.

Why would a calf need a coat

The obvious answer is to keep warm in cold weather. But, what's "cold" to a newborn calf? There is a temperature range where the amount of body heat produced by a calf is balanced by

her body heat losses. That range is called "thermo neutral."

For a 40 kg newborn calf this range is about 13° - 20°C (assuming it is dry and in a draft-free environment). As temperatures fall below 13°C for an extended period of time she has to burn extra energy to maintain its body core temperature.

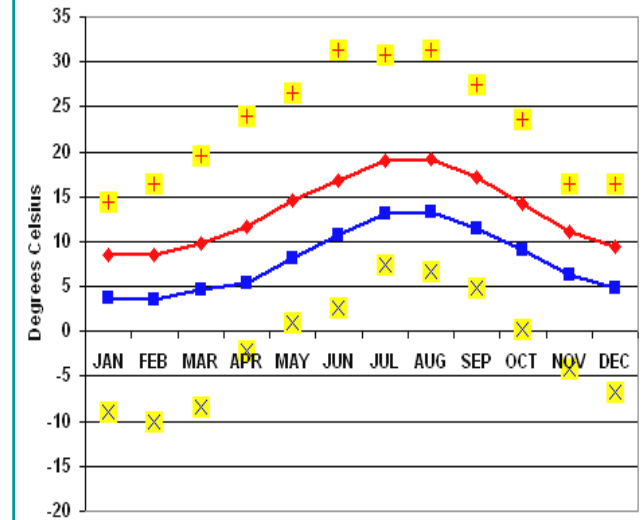


Research has shown that calves with coats in their first month of age can show an increase in daily live weight gain of 100 grams or more.

Calves with coats are also less likely to catch diseases such as scours and pneumonia

When to use a calf coat

General rule for the use of calf jackets on young or sick calves is that: – if you feel the need of a coat then so does a calf!



To make this more specific

In October night temperatures start falling under 10 degrees and they only get over 10 again that from May onwards, so it may well be possible that your young calves will benefit from them from the end of October to early May