

CALVING CHEAT SHEET

GUIDELINES FOR ASSISTANCE:

- Calf has not been born within 90 minutes of appearance of water bag
- If the dam has been straining for 30 minutes with no progress
- Legs emerge with toes pointing up
- Only the HEAD or the TAIL emerges
- Uncalved cow mothering another calf
- Cow demonstrating >6 hours of anxiety/restlessness

NORMAL STAGES OF LABOUR

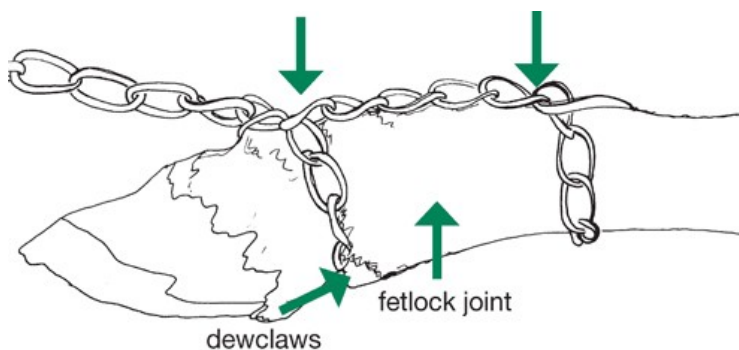
- Stage I: Cervix Dilates
Cow Restless
6 hours
- Stage II: Water bag appears
Calf delivered
1 hour
- Stage III: Placenta passed
2-12 hours

CALF IS TOO BIG FOR VAGINAL DELIVERY IF:

- You can't get your hands alongside feet in pelvis
- Can't get head and feet into pelvis at the same time
- Heifer is straining for 30 minutes and can't get head and feet into birth canal
- You can't get the fetlock of each foreleg more than one fist's width past the cow's vulva

COWS CARRY CALVES FOR AN AVERAGE OF 283 DAYS.

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TIPS FOR APPLYING CHAINS:

DON'T: wrap around your hand!
Don't pull with just one loop.

DO: Place one loop above the fetlock and one half hitch below dewclaws. The connecting piece of chain should run along the top of the leg.

PULLING CALVES

BE PATIENT

BE CLEAN. DON'T USE SOAP AS LUBRICANT.

USE AS MUCH LUBE AS REQUIRED.

USE STEADY, EVEN TRACTION. PULL WITH THE CONTRACTIONS OF THE COW.

NORMAL CALVES

- Start breathing within 30 seconds
- Lift head within 2 minutes
- Are up on their chest within 2-3 minutes
- Trying to stand in 20 minutes
- Standing within an hour.



Fig. 1: Anterior presentation



NORMAL PRESENTATION

Both forelegs and head are engaged in the birth canal

Make sure that cervix is fully dilated!

Place OB chains and apply traction as the cow pushes.

IF ONE PERSON PULLING CAN'T GET THE CALF'S FETLOCK OF EACH LEG ONE FIST WIDTH PAST THE VULVA THE CALF MAY BE TOO LARGE FOR VAGINAL DELIVERY!!

Fig. 2: Posterior presentation



BACKWARDS CALF

Feet protruding from vulva have soles pointing UP

(95% of the time calf will be backwards vs upside down)

Make sure umbilicus isn't wrapped around hindleg

Rotate hindquarters 45-90 degrees and pull straight back on both legs at the same time.

IF THE HIPS CAN ENTER THE BIRTH CANAL, A VAGINAL DELIVERY IS LIKELY. HIPS HAVE ENTERED IF YOU CAN SEE ALL OF ACHILLES TENDON AT THE VULVA.

Fig. 3: Breech presentation



BREECH DELIVERY

Calf is backwards with hindlimbs retained. May see tail of calf at vulva.

Ensure cervix and birth canal are adequately dilated.

Convert to posterior position by pushing calf's butt upwards and towards the head of the cow while pulling leg into a flexed hock position. Then cup the foot of that leg and pull it towards the tail of the calf, upwards and then into birth canal. Repeat with other leg. Then deliver as for backwards calf.

Fig. 4: Two front legs presentation



HEADBACK DELIVERY

Push on calf's chest to repulse a small distance back into the uterus. Hook hand in corner of mouth or over nose and straighten head. Can use head snare to bring head up into birthing canal.

Deliver as for normal presentation. Remember to evaluate for likelihood of vaginal delivery as sometimes the heads are deviated because there wasn't enough room for it to enter the birth canal.

REMEMBER TO ALWAYS HAVE THE COW ADEQUATELY RESTRAINED, TO BE AS CLEAN AS POSSIBLE (REPEAT WASHINGS AS NECESSARY), AND TO USE LOTS OF WATER-BASED LUBRICANT. IF YOU AREN'T MAKING PROGRESS AFTER 15 MINUTES, RETHINK YOUR PLAN!!