Calf Facilities Agtrek Day

February 2026

Today's Discussions & Options

Facility options:

- Outdoor barn
- Indoor barn

Feeding options:

- Automatic feeder
- Bottle feeding vs bucket feeding
- Milk replacer vs whole milk

Reasons Why You Joined Today

- Calves are not doing well
- Old barn in need of upgrades
- Tired of freezing while feeding calves outdoors
- Lack of employees
- Desire for better results

Different Facility Options

Outdoor:

- Individual hutches
- Group pens

Indoor:

- Cold barns
- Heated barns

One thing is clear:
when farmers enjoy
caring for their calves,
the calves do better.

Bottle Feeding vs Pail Feeding

Drinking Speeds

- Nursing from the cow: ½ liter per minute
- Bottle feeding: 2 liters per minute
- Pail (bucket) feeding: 11 liters per minute

Why Bottle Feeding Is Better for Calves

Prevents ruminal drinking

- Slower drinking helps milk go to the abomasum instead of the rumen, reducing bloating and digestive issues.

Improves digestion

- Nipple feeding stimulates more saliva, supporting better digestion and nutrient absorption.

Meets natural suckling needs

- Calves feel fuller and calmer, reducing cross-suckling and unwanted behaviors.

Reduces respiratory risks

- Slower intake lowers the risk of milk entering the lungs, helping prevent pneumonia.

Encourages natural posture

- An extended neck and raised head promote proper esophageal groove closure.

Different Ways to Feed Your Calves

Whole Milk

- Typical range: 26-35
- Based on milk testing: 3.4% protein / 4.6% fat

Promiks (Grober Supplement)

- Used to supplement whole milk
- Supports consistency and nutrient balance

Waste Milk

- Feed with great caution
- Pasteurization recommended to eliminate harmful organism
  - Mycoplasma
  - Johne’s disease

Milk Replacer Options

- Vision 26-16 PS
- Vision 22-20 PS
- Grober Excel DicoX
- Grober Achieve 24-22

Acidified Milk Replacer

- Milk replacer with formic acid added
- Helps improve stability and reduce bacterial growth

Cost Comparison: Whole Milk vs Milk Replacer

Whole Milk

- Milk price under quota: $101/hL ($1.01/litre)
- Feeding rate: 8 litres/day
- Total cost: $8.08 per calf per day

Milk Replacer – Vision 22/20 PS

- Cost: $0,72/litre
- Feeding rate: 8 litres/day
- Total cost: $5.76 per calf per day

Milk Replacer – Vision 26/16 PS

- Cost: $0,76/litre
- Feeding rate: 8 litres/day
- Total cost: $6.06 per calf per day

Annual Cost Difference

- Feeding 50 calves for 56 days
- Cost difference between whole milk and Vision 26/16 PS: $5,650 per year

Milk replacer can significantly reduce feeding costs while maintaining consistency.

Make Sure You’re Feeding the Right Amount of Milk

Twice-a-day feeding:

- 4 L per feeding
- Total: 8 L per day

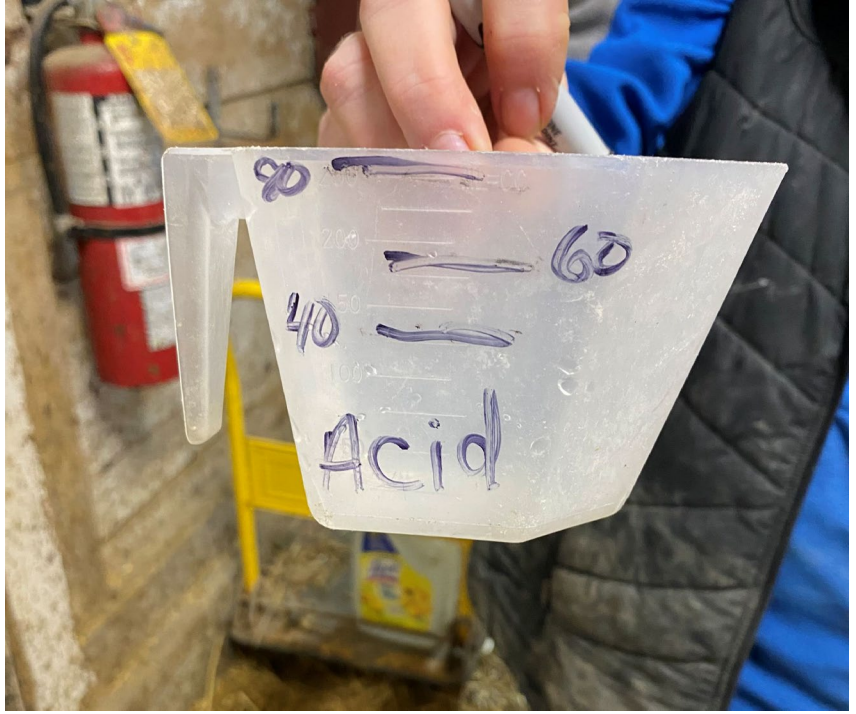
Three times per day feeding:

- Up to 10 L per day

Always double-check feeding amounts

- Avoid underfeeding calves
- Consistent intake supports growth and health

Fully Acidified Milk for Calves



Instructions: To be fed to cattle

Litres of milk	Ml of water	Ml of formic acid
20	540	60
25	675	75
30	810	90
40	1080	120
50	1350	150
60	1620	180
70	1890	210
80	2160	240
90	2430	270

Mix Formic acid with water then add to milk. Mix well!!!
Stir again in 15 minutes….then dispense

**** Formula is one part acid to 9 parts water****

Fully Acidified Milk

Feeding System: Fully Acidified Milk

- Following the acidified milk protocol
- Mixing ratio: 1 part acid to 9 parts water
- Mix thoroughly using a drill mixer
- Feeding rate: up to 10 L per calf, adjusted based on age
- Calves naturally mix the milk while drinking – system works very well
- Valves with tubs are required for proper function
- Can be fed once daily at 20 degree
- Free-choice calf starter offered to support rumen development

Urbain Automatic Feeder

Feeding System: Urbain automatic feeder

- Less than one full year of use
- Very impressed with how calves adapt to self-feeding

Feeding Protocol:

- 5 days in individual pens
- Milk replacer, fed twice daily
- Bottle-fed initially
- Gradual introduction to the robot – calves learn by watching others
- Introduce two calves at a time to the feeder

Observed Benefits:

- Weaned calves look healthier when moved to the other barn
- Much less stress during transition
- Easy cleaning thanks to the gutter located in front of the pens

Warm Barn

Facility: Warm barn (5 degree)

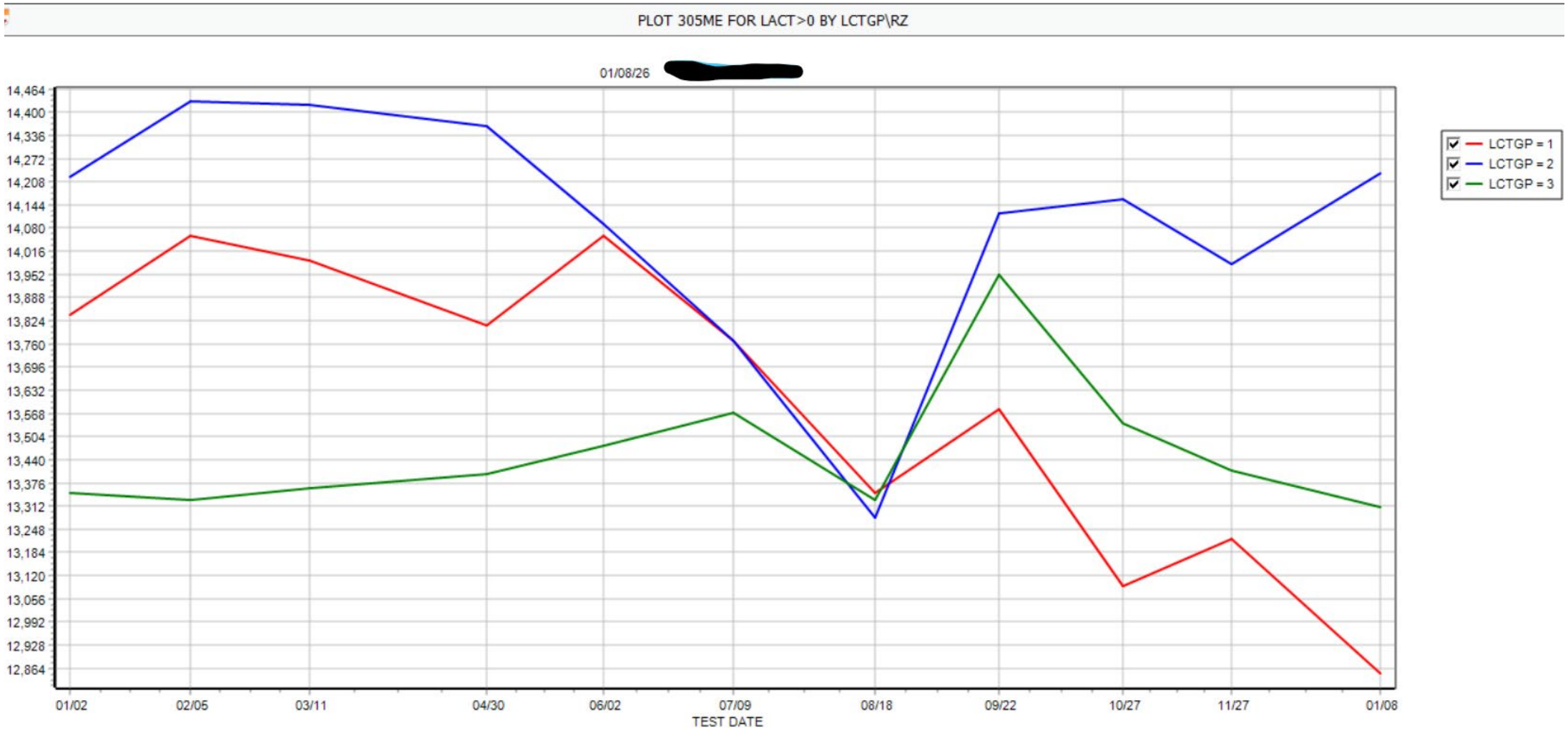
- Warm enough to prevent moisture buildup
- Calves kept in individual pens for 10-14 days
- Allows farmers to take time to observe calf comfort and health
- Excellent ventilation
- Clean, well-maintained pens


HOULE

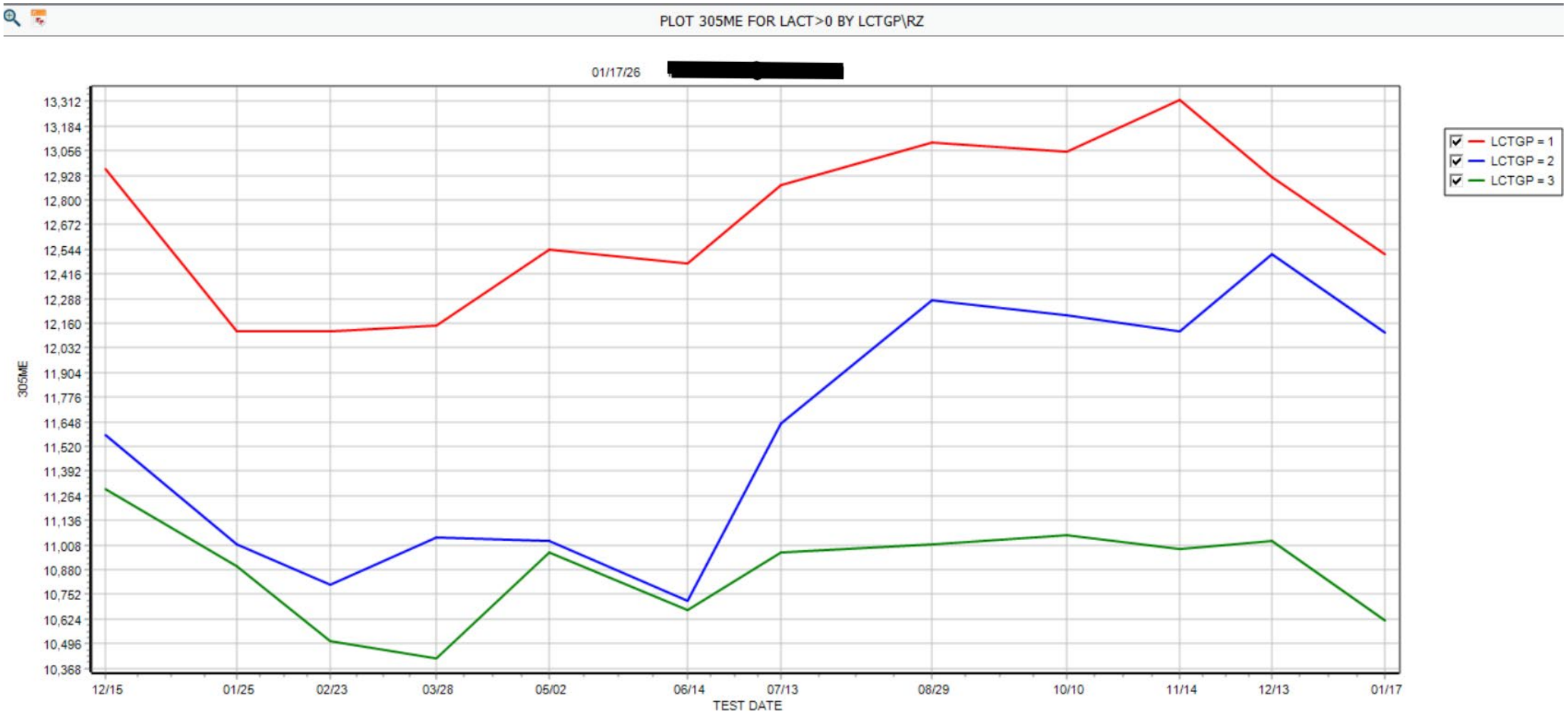
Innovation Idea

- Reduced pneumonia cases by adding heat to calf room
- Black plastic tubing connects the milk house to the calf room wall
- Warm air is distributed through perforated holes in the tubing
- Outdoor fans circulate fresh air, ensuring proper ventilation
- Combines heat and airflow for a healthier calf environment

- Rumen Development After Colostrum
- After colostrum, focus shifts to rumen development
- The main goal is to prepare calves for future lactation
- Rumen papillae develop through:
  - Water
  - Starch
  - Fiber
- Begin offering free-choice calf starter and fresh water at 4 days of age



Are your first-lactation cows milking well?



First-lactation cows are doing better here.

Your Agtrek team is here to support you every step of the way.