

Recommended calf weaning procedure

- Wean at one year of age and above
- Wean gradually
- Provide more water to calf after weaning
- At weaning, deworm calf and wash with acaricides to remove external parasites
- Cover the weaners with trypanosomosis drugs once a year
- Graze the weaner on quality forage and provide minerals
- Monitor growth progress for three months after weaning

Benefits of these practices

- Guarantees a living and healthy calf at birth
- Reduces risk to the mother
- Enhances calf survival and growth rates
- Result to increase herd size
- Improves household food security



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Better camel calf management for larger herd



Introduction

Camel calves are important in that they are the future camels, without which the herd cannot grow and neither would milk be available. Under traditional pastoral production systems mortality rates of up to 60% have been reported among calves aged below three months. This high mortality has been mainly attributed to diseases like diarrhea, tick paralysis and competition for milk with humans, among others. Several strategies can be used to increase camel calf survival rate and the subsequent herd size.

Hints for ensuring a healthy calf at birth



- Healthy parents with known history
- Parents that are not inbred lines
- Mother that has not calved more than 5 times
- Bull that is not older than 12 years

Management of the mother, a month before birth

- Provide adequate quality forage, water, manage diseases, avoid long distance walking & ensure calving near *boma*
- Graze the mother in areas free of potholes, gullies, hills & stagnant water
- Keep close watch of the mother to avoid predation & straying

How to manage birth

- Ensure calf is expelled when the mother is lying & check if the calf is breathing normally
- Trigger breathing by pouring cold water over the chest, massaging the nostrils from the eye to remove mucus in case of breathing problems
- Strip umbilical cord off contents & tie loosely
- Place calf in front of the mother to facilitate acceptance
- Assist the calf to suckle within the first 6 hours to acquire passive immunity and pass the first faeces
- In case of calf rejection, smear dam with birth fluids around the nostril or isolate from the herd with the calf and scare it to facilitate acceptance



Milk feeding to the calf

- Control competition for milk with humans
- Allow calf to suckle two teats for the first two months of growth
- Provide extra milk from other camels in case mother is a low yielder
- Foster calf to another mother in case of rejection or death of mother
- Control mastitis for good udder health
- Let the calf follow the mother to grazing field for the first 3 months



- Reduce milk allowance to calf after five to six months especially if forage quality is good

Water and feed provision to the calf

- Introduce the calf to forage as early as at one month of age by allowing it to accompany the mother during the day
- Ensure access to quality forage
- Introduce the calf to water after 2 to 3 months and provide water after 3 to 5 days
- Do not walk the calf far away from *boma*



Manage critical diseases & parasites

- Control tick paralysis through regular washing with acaricides depending on the tick load, shaving and hand removal
- Treat diarrhoea using sulphur based drugs e.g S-Dime tablets
- Stop diarrhoea by giving charcoal solution or eggs from chicken that interacts with livestock
- Return water lost through diarrhoea by giving a solution of honey and salt