



can learn to do it yourself. For natural breeding you will need one bull for about each 25 cows, if you have them all bred in a 2 month breeding period. However, you might be able to share a bull with a neighbor, if you both have small herds and don't mind having your calves at different times of the year. As an example, one bull could breed your 20 cows to have their calves in the spring and later breed your neighbor's 20 cows to calve in the fall.

Your decision on when to have your calves born should be based on when you can best supply your cows with the extra nutrition they need after calving and when you want to sell them. Most cattlemen have their calves born in the winter and provide supplemental feed for the cow when the calf is young. That way when grass is plentiful in the summer, the calves are old enough to graze in addition to nursing their mothers.

Calf Care is important from the moment of birth. *Be careful — new mothers are not always friendly!* If the calf has trouble breathing, wipe off the mouth and nose and massage the chest to stimulate breathing. If the cow's teats and udder are dirty, try to clean them with a damp cloth so the calf will be more likely to nurse. Calves usually stand and begin

nursing within the first hour but weak calves may need your help. Get the calf up, move it up to the cow's udder and try to get it to begin sucking on one of the cow's teats. If you have trouble, squeeze a little milk out onto your finger and put it into the calf's mouth. After doing this a few times the calf will learn to suck for milk and will try harder to hold onto the cow's teat when you put it into the calf's mouth. The cow's first milk, colostrum, is necessary for a healthy calf because it contains extra protein and antibodies to give the calf immunity to many diseases. It's important that each calf get this colostrum milk within a few hours after birth.

Calves should be dehorned. The best way to not have horns on calves is to use non-horned (polled) breeding stock, but calves with horns can be dehorned rather easily when young. A caustic paste can be used for dehorning young calves and is better than cutting horns off large calves. Have your veterinarian show you how the first time and then you can handle it yourself.

Male calves should be castrated to become steers unless you specifically want bulls for some reason. For selling your calves at weaning you will want to castrate all bull calves, either at birth or at two to