

Build an on-site calf feed preparation area

Do you make many trips each day between the milk house and the calf hutches or pens? The greater the distance between the supplies and the housing area, the more time workers will waste traveling back and forth. On-site feed preparation can eliminate most of the travel time involved in feeding preweaned calves. Less walking back and forth saves labor and improves workers' comfort and safety.

Save travel time. If you prepare feed 50 or more yards away from the hutches or pens, as much as 20% of feeding time may be spent walking back and forth. Eliminating 8 to 12 50-yard trips per day may save 10-15 min/day, or 60-90 hr/year.

Save labor costs. The amount of labor you will save by building an on-site prep area depends on the number of calves fed, the number of trips made each feeding and the distance traveled. The pay-back time when investing in an on-site prep area depends on the actual labor, and construction costs. When building a new calf barn, the additional cost for a prep room is moderate, and the pay-back time is short. With outdoor

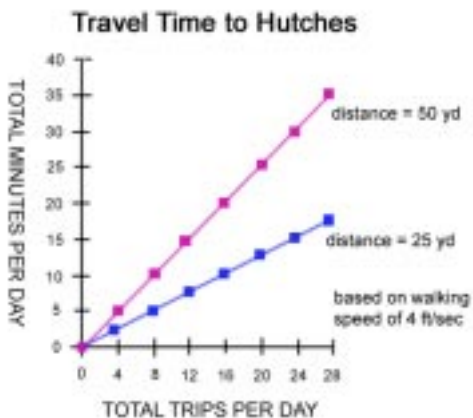


Prep room in a 7'x14' calf barn. Contains a refrigerator, a sink with hot and cold running water, and a space heater.

hutches, the pay-back time may vary from 4-7 years for operations feeding 20-40 preweaned calves.

Reduce fatigue and risk of injury. Delivering milk or grain to calves often involves lifting and carrying heavy 5-gallon buckets, with a load of up to 30 or 40 lbs. in each hand. Carrying these loads for long distances is tiring, and puts strain on the back and arms. In winter, there is the added danger of slipping and falling on ice or snow.

Improve worker comfort. Especially with hutches, an on-site prep room will provide some protection from the cold, wind, rain and blazing sun.



**WORK
EFFICIENCY**



TIP SHEET

Ideas for more efficient wet feeding of calves.

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How to build an on-site prep area:

Be sure to include the following in your calf care prep room:

- **Electricity.**
- **A water supply and water heater.** The room should have hot and cold water so that all the preparation and clean-up work can be done there. A hose can be stored inside and used to distribute water year round, so you do not have to haul water in pails.
- **A sink with suitable drainage.**
- **A concrete floor with a drain.** Sink and floor drains should empty into manure storage, a holding tank, or a drain field not accessible to cows.

- **Adequate insulation and heating** to maintain a temperature of 40 degrees Fahrenheit on the coldest winter days. This will ensure worker comfort and help prevent the pipes from freezing.
- **Ventilation.**
- **A refrigerator/freezer** to store medications and extra colostrum.
- **Adequate storage space** for buckets, pails, and other supplies. The moist environment of the prep room is not ideal for long-term storage of milk replacer or dry feed. Smaller quantities of each could be stored in airtight containers on-site.

What will it cost?

Your materials cost for building an on-site prep room will be approximately \$1000-\$2000, depending on size. Costs might be lower if the

room is built inside an existing structure. The worksheet below breaks down the estimated cost for a 10'x 12' room.

Estimated Costs for a Calf Care Preparation Room	
<i>(Based on a 120 sq. ft. room)</i>	
<u>Materials</u>	<u>Cost</u>
Concrete floor	120.00
Interior walls (milkhouse panels)	225.00
Exterior walls (1/2" plywood)	215.00
Studs (2"x6")	120.00
Insulation/vapor barrier	100.00
Water heater	150.00
Plumbing including a double sink	150.00
Door with window	160.00
Heater and thermostat	120.00
Electrical mat'ls, wiring	75.00
Galvanized pipe 3/4" @ \$1.00/ft	***
Ditching for plumbing, wiring	***
Total	1435.00
*** costs will vary based on farm layout	

This material was developed by the Wisconsin Healthy Farmers, Healthy Profits Project, whose goal is to find and share work efficiency tips that maintain farmers' health and safety and also increase profits. For more information, call (608)262-7408 or visit our website at <http://bse.wisc.edu/hfhp/>

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Research for this publication: was funded by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH).



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