



**Animal Health
Fact Sheet**

COMPARISON OF RATIONS AT WEANING

USU-1994



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July 1997

AH/Beef/32

Calves in three groups were fed grass hay for 24–36 hours after weaning. For the next 2 weeks they were fed the rations below. For the final 2 weeks, all groups were fed ration number two.

Calves were individually weighed at weaning, at 2 weeks, and at end of trial.

Group/Ration	Number of Calves	Gain (lbs)		
		0-2 weeks	2-4 weeks	Total
1) Alfalfa (12#) + Barley (4#)	33	-3.6	46.2	42.5
2) Alfalfa (10#), Barley (4#), Silage (6#)	32	12.8	30.0	42.8
3) Grass hay (ad. lib)	32	6.1	6.4	13.0

Calves fed only grass hay for two weeks gained significantly less than calves on either of the other rations. There was only one ill and one bloated calf, both in group one, and their inclusion/exclusion did not affect the significance of the gain data.

- It would appear the best weaning ration for our area may be:
- Feed grass hay for 1-2 days.
- Top dress onto the grass hay a ration of chopped alfalfa, rolled or ground barley, and corn silage.
- Gradually increase the mixed ration and decrease the grass hay.
- For bloat control, include some grass hay in the mixed ration and increase the silage if needed.