



From the desk of Dr. Stephanie Kozdron

February 1st, 2017

All year is calving season for our dairy clients but we are now approaching prime season for our beef cows. With reference to the University Of Missouri College Of Veterinary Medicine 6-10% of all beef calves born in the US die at or soon after birth with half of them contributed to calving dystocias/ difficulties. With the significant dollar loss annually, this issue remains second only to the loss of failing to conceive. Below is a nice quick to the point of the three general stages that should occur during a normal calving:

Stage & Time	Event
Preparatory (2 to 6 hours)	1. Calf rotates to upright position
	2. Uterine contractions begin
	3. Water sac expelled
Delivery (1 hour or less)	1. Cow usually lying down
	2. Fetus enters birth canal
	3. Front feet and head protrude first
	4. Calf delivery completed
Cleaning (2 to 8 hours)	1. Cotyledon-caruncle (button) attachments relax
	2. Uterine contractions expel membranes

During the pregnancy the calf is normally on its back and just prior to labor it rotates to the upright position with front legs and head pointed in direction of the birth canal. Initial contractions, start out at approximately 15 minute intervals and become more frequent as labor progresses to every few minutes. Any disturbances/ stress / excitement during this time period can inhibit contractions and delay calving.

In this chart, it says for stage 2 of delivery 1 hour or less this is in mature cows... assistance is going to be warranted if this goes beyond 2-3 hours. However, with the heifers going thru calving for the first time we can see this stage last 1-2 hours. Once we see that water sac appear in stage one / preparatory stage we hope to see a normal delivery within 2 hours. If prolonged, the calf may be born dead or in a very stressed/ weakened condition. With timing being critical, frequent observations are a must.

Before starting any internal exam cleanliness cannot be over-emphasized. Introduction of bacteria via ourselves or equipment can delay future return to estrus and lower conception.

With the cow restrained and tail pulled to the side the external area around the anus and vulva should be cleaned with soapy water. Arms and any equipment should also be disinfected prior to entering.

Steps for calving assistance:

1. After observation of a delay in calving... a pelvic exam is warranted checking to extent of cervical dilation, position of calf, size of calf relative to birth canal.
2. If calf is in normal position placement of chains around the pastern with looped chain just above the hooves. It helps pulling one leg and then the other in a "walking out" manner to help get shoulders thru. Apply lubrication.
3. Once head and shoulders exposed rotating the calf about a quarter turn will help aid in hips entering pelvic canal.
4. It is always helpful if an extra hand is available to constantly check the mother while someone is pulling to monitor for tightness to prevent tears.

Once we have the calf on the ground clear any mucus from the calf's mouth with your hands. Stimulate the calf to breathe by briskly rubbing, tickling inside on nostril with straw, or even warm water to the ears.

We understand that it doesn't always go this easy so if you have any thought of concern during your pelvic exam give us a call and either talk to one of us for advise or we will be out to assist you.

### Mark your Calendar

#### Calf Meeting @ Clinic

**Topic: Salmonella Prevention & Diagnosis**

**Date: February 15th, 2017**

**Times: 1:30 PM & 5 PM**

#### Herdsmen Meeting @ Clinic

**Topic: Salmonella—What it Means to You  
Risk Assessment & Prevention**

**Date: March 1st, 2017**

**Time: 1:30 PM & 5 PM**

R.S.V.P.

(810) 376-2425 or via text to (810) 404-9320

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