



Benchmarking Calf Health and Growth on BC Farms

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Two indicators of success in calf rearing programs are failure of passive transfer (FPT) and growth rates. This project provided BC farmers with measures for their farms, allowing them to compare their performance with others in the region.

Aim: To describe variation among BC farms in FPT, calf weight gains during the milk-feeding period, and weight gains of older heifers

Methodology: 38 farms in the lower Fraser Valley region of British Columbia, Canada were each visited 3 times by the same assessor. Variables measured included:

FPT

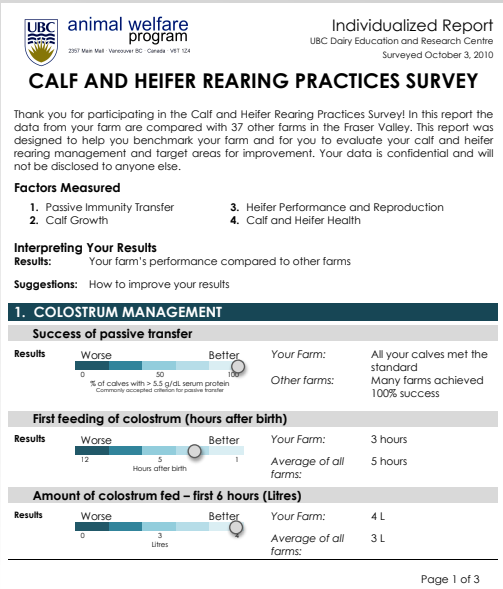
- Sampled 10 (< 14 d) calves per farm
- Failure = serum protein < 5.5 g/dL

Gains

- Heart girth tapes for BW (14±5 pre-weaned calves & 17±6 older heifers, per farm)
- Gains estimated using the within-farm slope (from the line equation, BW=age)

Reporting Back

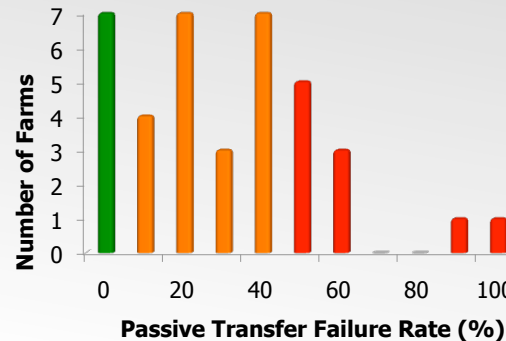
Each producer received a confidential report showing results for their farm in comparison to other farms



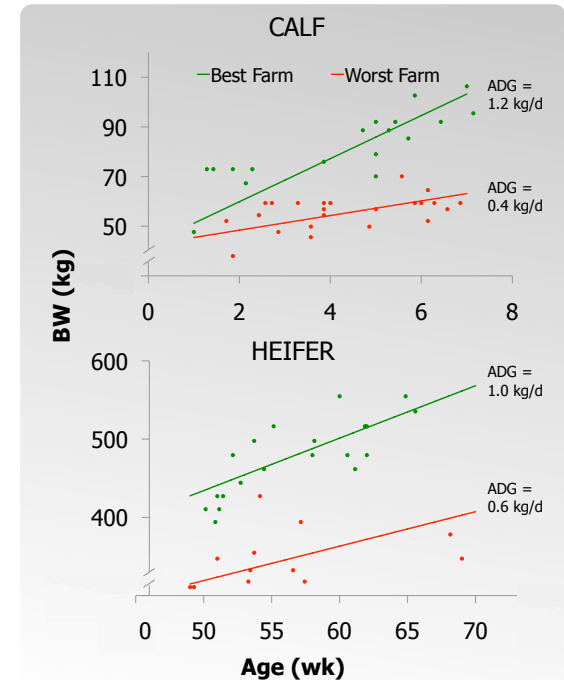
Passive Transfer

Some farms were able to avoid FPT

But on other farms FPT was common



Growth Rates



Reports allowed producers to evaluate calf rearing success to others in the region. Low rates of FPT, and gains averaging 1 kg/d for both pre-weaned calves and older heifers, are achievable for farms in this region.