

# CALVING PROTOCOL VE Vets

## WHEN TO CHECK/INTERVENE WITH CALVING COW

### 1<sup>st</sup> STAGE OF LABOUR (preparation stage)

- Cows and heifers will often appear nervous and isolate themselves from the rest of the herd
- Cow may be restless (getting up and down)
  - Check if springing up. If not she may have colic (e.g. gut twist) and may need immediate veterinary attention. Call manager immediately
- Make a note of cow/heifer number and time
- **If not progressed to second stage of labour within 6 hours for cows and 8 for heifers, bring into yards and assess. Twisted Uterus?**

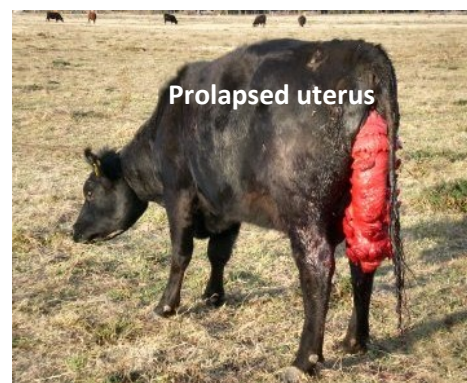
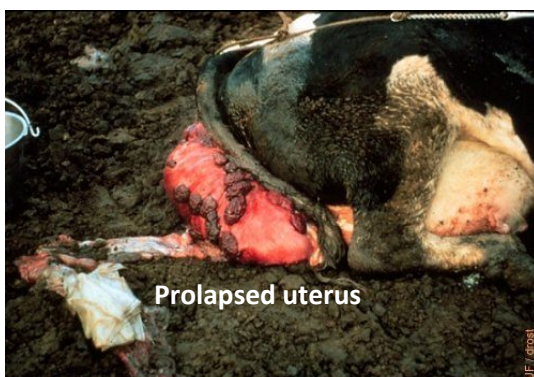
### 2<sup>nd</sup> STAGE OF LABOUR (delivery stage)

- In this stage the calf is pushed into birth canal, abdominal contractions are more forceful (cow/heifer is visually straining) and water bags should break
- Intervene if cow is:
  - **Pushing for more than 2 hours**
  - **No progress is being made within 20 minutes**
  - **Calving going slowly**
  - **Calving is abnormal** (e.g. head but no legs, tail only etc.)



### PROLAPSED UTERUS – EMERGENCY

- Whole or part of breeding bag protruding from rear after cow has calved
- **CALL VET IMMEDIATELY**
- **Get prepared** before vet arrives
  - Keep cow quiet, avoid her moving
  - Leave her if she is down, but ensure cow is upright rather than on her side (e.g. use a hay bale)
  - Put apron under uterus to keep it clean
  - Cow is likely to have milk fever, give calcium if she needs it immediately or if already standing. Otherwise wait for vet, as do not want her getting up and damaging uterus
  - Get buckets of warm clean water ready and get additional help



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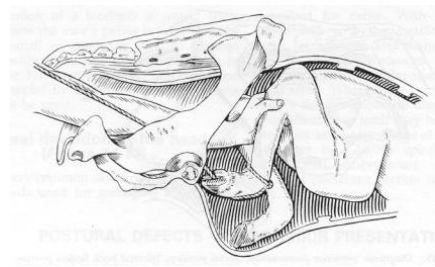
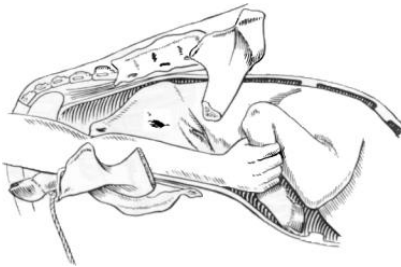
## GUIDELINES WHEN CALVING A COW

### EXAMINE THE COW

- Does cow need immediate treatment?
- Clean back end of cow and your hands/arms, using clean warm water and disinfectant
- Put on gloves and use **lots of lube** (often underused)

### EXAMINE THE CALF

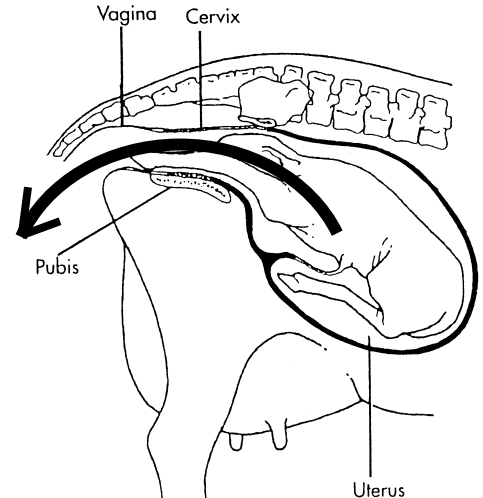
- Is it dead or alive?
  - If obviously dead, focus immediately on cow (e.g. does she need starter plus? calcium? or antibiotics?)
- Front or back legs?
  - Front leg has 2 folding joints bending in same direction before elbow - like a C
  - Back Leg has 2 folding joints bending in opposite directions before knee - like a Z



- Do all legs meet to same body? Where is head? Where is tail/anus?
- Will it fit through the pelvis?

### CALVE THE COW

- Put chains/ropes on correctly – above joint!
- Do you need a head rope?
- Calve in a curve (like a banana)
- **USE THE TEN MINUTE RULE**
  - If you are not making any progress stop, relax and rethink. Double check the calf's presentation. Try something different? Do you need more lube? Get manager to check or call the Vet?
- **CHECK FOR A TWIN!**
- Check for tears



### TREAT THE COW

- Starter plus? Anti-inflammatory?
- Antibiotics?
- Oral fluids if dehydrated

### DON'T FORGET THE CALF

- Clear mucous from mouth
  - Use finger and if required, hang for no longer than 1 minute
- Pinch nose? (to stimulate breathing)
- Don't leave on concrete, get warm and dry
- Transport in wheelbarrow to calf pen.
- Give **colostrum** and **spray the naval**

