



MARCH 2022 DAIRY NEWSLETTER

Springs To-Do-List

Steady

- Spring is an excellent time of year to go over farm safety with all members of the team
- Circle checks save lives. Slow down to speed up
- Rushing, stress and sleep deprivation all contribute to accidents

Plan

- Feed & animal inventory, field rotations, etc. What would you want to change from last year?
- Commodity prices, fuel, interest rates etc will play larger roles in planning out the year

Repair

- Repair or replace any items which took a beating over the winter
- Barn curtains, calf blankets, gates, overhead doors, hutches, etc

Invest

- Purchase items that were in short supply last winter
- Check out the grants available to farmers via Canadian Agricultural Partnership

Nourish

- Healthy soil, bodies and minds are essential for a successful growing season
- Take care of your health by prioritizing healthy eating, drinking lots of water and getting enough sleep

Grow

- Reach out to all of your advisors, including your veterinarians, for ideas for change
- Develop new knowledge and improve existing skills with webinars, online workshops and in person learning opportunities

With Spring on the horizon, farms and producers are about to enter one of the busiest times of year. For many, the winter was particularly challenging to get through both due to the severe cold as well as the drawn out effects of the pandemic. With warmer weather comes hope and excitement, change and optimism, as well as a long to-do list in order to get ready. Here are a few things we thought should be a priority before you get too busy.



Spring Cleaning

Cleaning in the winter is a challenge. When the weather is severe, creating a bunch of ice from pressure washing calf hutches or dividers can be extremely problematic. With the warmer weather, make sure you prioritize catching up on hutches and calving pens. These are common sources for pathogens that infect calves at birth and can produce scours, navel and joint infections, and will compromise calf health.

Calf blankets are vitally important during the winter, but are quick to be pulled off and forgotten about until the next year. Washing them at the end of the season, tending to any rips or missing straps, and storing them in a rodent proof container will not only extend their life, but will improve their function. If they sit soiled for too long or become damaged by rodents, the padding will lose its insulative properties, rendering them useless.

Barn curtains, eavestroughs, overhead doors, and gates are just some of the areas barns take a beating over the long winter. Ripped curtains will do a poor job of keeping the sun out in the warmer weather. Broken eavestroughs will allow heavy spring rains to flood barn yards or calf hutch areas. Take the time to tend to these issues before getting too busy with spring planting.

Planters, drills, discs and plows may have been left in various states of repair to sit over the winter. A thorough cleaning will allow you to take stock of the condition of equipment, order necessary parts, and make required adjustments.

Spring Planting

Field rotations are going to be influenced by inventory, planting conditions, and prices, among other things. When it comes to calculating feed inventory requirements, make sure you involve your nutritionist. While the number of required acres of hay fields and corn silage are going to be greatly influenced by their performance / yield, improvement to storage will have an enormous impact on both the amount of feed that is wasted, as well as the quality. A silage bunk with a 14 lb/sq ft packing density will experience nearly 17% dry matter (DM) loss, while a bunk packed at 20 lb/sq ft will be kept to 10% DM loss. The instability of a poorly packed bunk will also produce favorable growing conditions for yeasts and molds, thereby reducing feed quality and producing many negative health consequences.