



CALF FEEDING AND CARE - BENEFITS

AIM: TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ON THE BENEFITS OF FEEDING CALVES AND HEIFERS FOR GROWTH AND HEALTH

- ❖ Calves and heifers are your future milking animals. So it is important to look after them properly. **Today’s female calf is tomorrow’s cow!**
- ❖ By good feeding and providing good care you aim to ensure **proper daily growth** and **prevent calves from dying**. You also **maximise profitability** (lifetime milk volumes and their own calves).

What are the benefits of looking after my calves and heifers?

- ❖ Calves which are well fed and well looked after should grow faster and keep strong and healthy.
- ❖ Strong healthy calves grow into strong heifers.
- ❖ These heifers should mature earlier than heifers that are poorly fed or have been poorly looked after.
- ❖ Well-fed heifers will become cows earlier and produce more milk than heifers that are poorly looked after.

So, what might be the difference between a poorly fed and well-fed heifer?

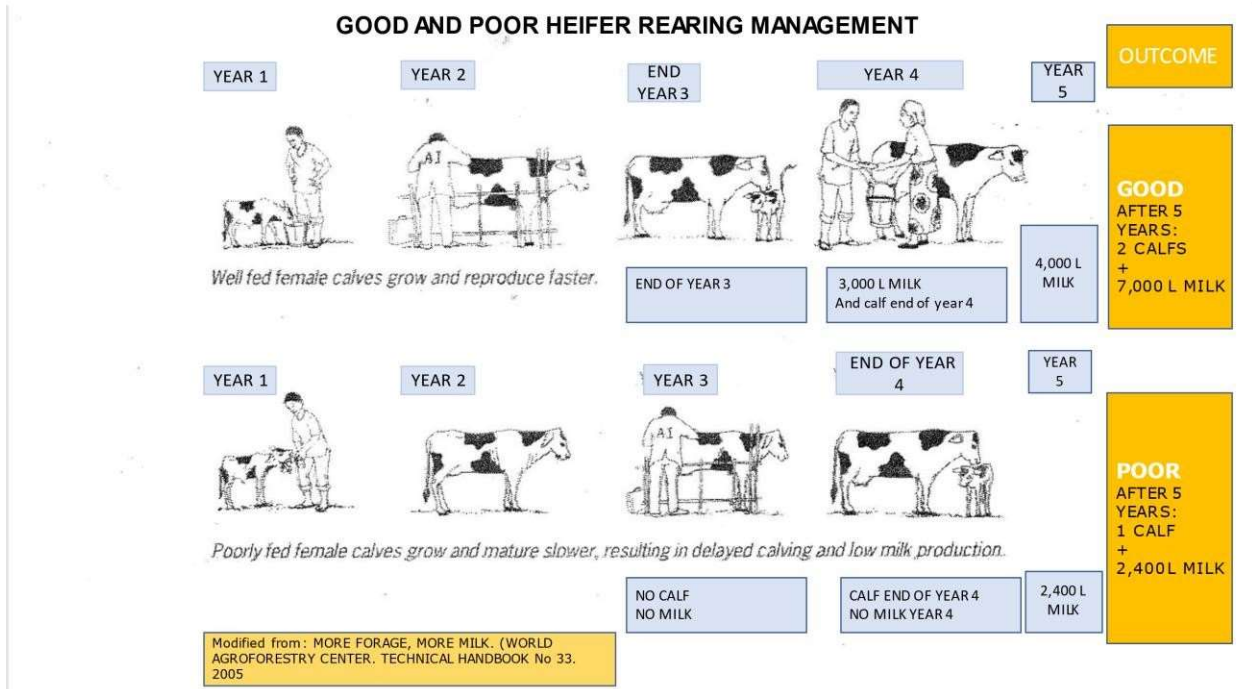


Illustration comparing the outcome after 5 years of lifetime for a dairy (or dairy cross breed) heifer/cow under GOOD and POOR management. Because of the slow growth rate during time of rearing it can further be expected that the poorly reared heifer will continue to have a lower production capacity throughout her lifetime resulting in lower overall milk production.

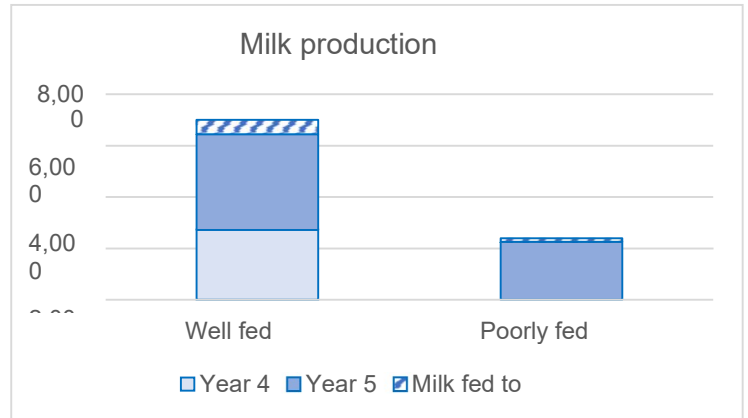


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So, what might that mean to me?

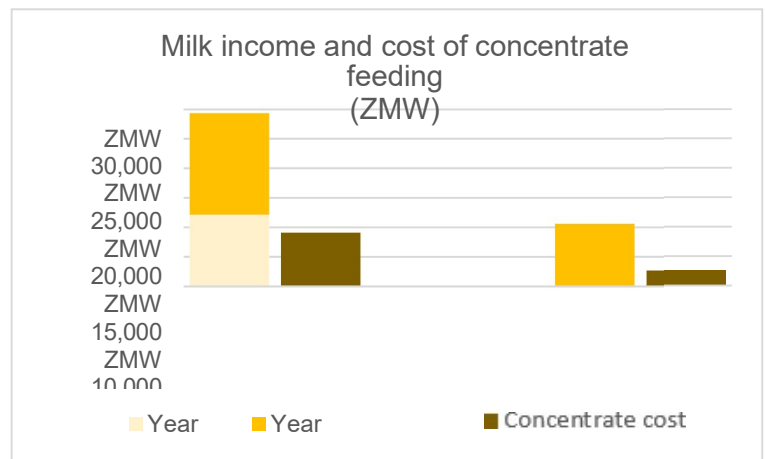
Milk production

- ❖ By Year Five the **well-fed heifer** would have produced a total of **7,000 litres of milk**.
- ❖ **560 litres** of this milk would have been fed to her two calves.
- ❖ So **6,440** litres could be sold.
- ❖ By Year Five the **poorly fed heifer** would have produced **2,400 litres of milk**. **140 litres** (half the recommended amount) might have been fed to her one calf
- ❖ So, only **2,260** could be sold.



Milk income (in this example, milk is sold at ZMW 5 per litre)

- ❖ The owner of the **well-fed heifer** would get **ZMW 12,200** in Year Four and **ZMW 17,200** in Year Five. A total of **ZMW 29,400 for their 6,440 litres of milk**.
- ❖ The owner of the **poorly fed heifer** would get **ZMW 10,600 for their 2,400 litres of milk**.
- ❖ This is a difference of ZMW 18,800 -or the same as ZMW 10 income per day for the five years.
- ❖ The owner of the well-fed animals would also have two calves.



Cost of concentrates / dairy meal for a cow during the first five years using different calf and heifer management:

- ☺ **Good feeding and management of calves and heifers will require 3,040 kg of concentrate/calf meal at a cost of ZMW 9,120 at a price of ZMW 3 per kg.**
- ☹ **Poor feeding and management of calves and heifers will require 890 kg of concentrate/calf meal at a cost of ZMW 2,670 at a price of ZMW 3 per kg.**

Costs of roughage, labor, animal health and other inputs are assumed similar for both systems.

And how much income will I lose from feeding milk to my calves?

- ❖ The value of 280 litres of milk to be fed to a calf during the first 10 weeks of life equals ZMW 1,400 at a milk price of ZMW 5 per litre.
- ❖ However, feeding this milk to calves helps them to have a good start in life and a better chance of giving you more milk (themselves and from their calves) during their lifetime.

ZDTP is focused on supporting dairy farmers to improve their productivity, milk quality and linkages to urban markets. The views expressed in this publication are those of the implementers of the programme and do not necessarily reflect those of the New Zealand Government. For further information, please contact ZDTP on zdtpinfo@primeconsultants.net. Follow us on www.zambiadairy.com, Facebook (facebook.com/zambiadairy/) and Twitter ([@DairyZambia](https://twitter.com/DairyZambia)).