



Effect of Feeding Time on Calving Time

Triangle Cross Livestock 2002

Mike Mallett, County Extension Agent-Agriculture

Lampasas County

Summary:

Cows fed in the late evening appear to calve mostly during the day.

Objective:

To determine calving times in a group of cows fed in the evening.

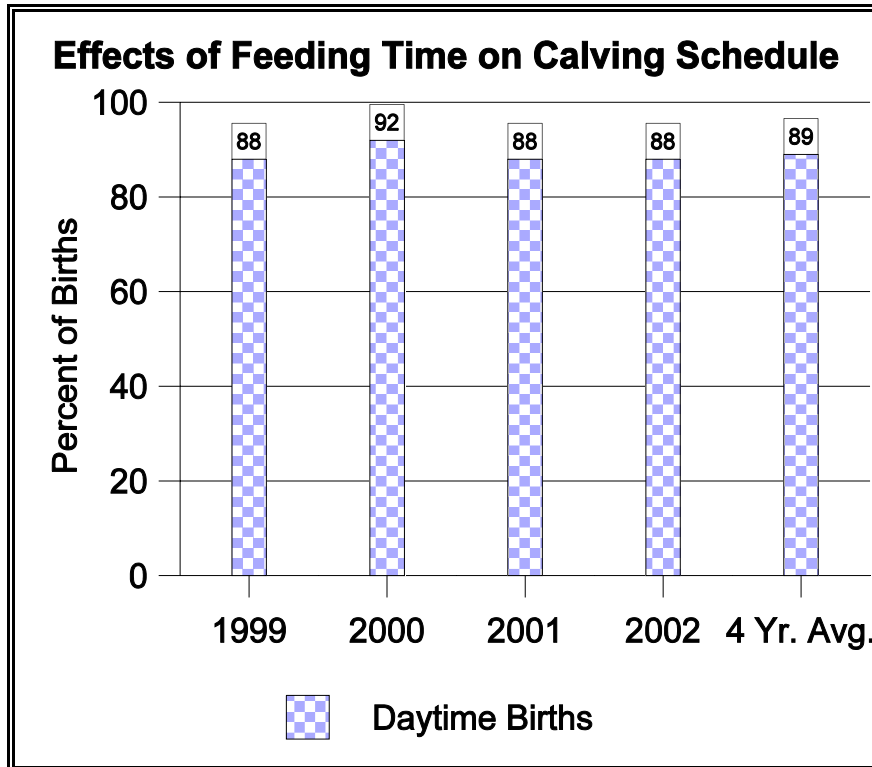
Materials and Methods:

A group of 26 cows was fed daily between 6 p.m. and 7 p.m. Calving times were recorded as “day” (6 a.m. to 8 p.m.) or “night” (8 p.m. to 6 a.m.). Calving was from late September to October.

Results and Discussion:

If calving time in a group of cows is evenly distributed over a 24-hour period, checking for difficult births is a 24-hour task. If calving could be concentrated, labor could be reduced and calving females could be checked more conveniently.

Of the 26 cows, only 3 calved at night. Similar results were noted in 1999, 2000, and 2001. This effect originally was reported some years ago by a Canadian who fed a group of heifers in late evening and also found that few calvings occurred at night. Therefore, feeding in the evening could lessen the need to check females in the middle of the night. This could be particularly helpful in a set of first-calf heifers. However, if a producer is not able to check females during the day, concentrating calving during the day might not be beneficial. See chart on following page.



Acknowledgments:

Appreciation is expressed to Triangle Cross Livestock for providing the cattle and land to conduct this demonstration.

Trade names of commercial products used in this report are included only for better understanding and clarity. Reference to commercial products or trade names is made with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by the Texas A&M University System is implied. Readers should realize that results from one experiment do not represent conclusive evidence that the same response would occur where conditions vary.