

## CALF STARTER MEAL/GROWTH MEAL

The success of an early-weaning system depends on the degree to which the starter meal and the growth meal are able to meet the nutrient requirements of the young calf. The extent to which the rumen has developed to be able to fulfil the necessary digestive functions also plays a role in the weaning programme.

- ✂ From birth until the calf is approximately 3 months old a calf starter meal must be used, based on 100% natural protein (e.g. fish meal and Oil cake meal).
- ✂ Between 3 and 6 months of age the calf must have free access to good quality grazing and a small quantity of good hay. The amount of calf growth meal that is being fed will depend on the quality and availability of the grazing and/or hay.

### Quantity of meal to be fed

Very good hay	1 kg meal/ day
Good/average hay	1,5 kg meal/ day
Poor hay	2 kg meal/ day

Between 6 and 12 months of age a daily supplementation of 1 kg of calf growth meal should be sufficient.

### Requirements for calf starter meals and precautions to be taken:

- ✂ The success of changing from full milk to calf meal depends largely on the palatability of the meal. The following natural protein sources are ranked in order of most palatable to less palatable: *Soybean oil cake*>*Cotton seed oil cake*> *Fish meal*. Molasses and lucerne enhance the palatability of the meal.
- ✂ Calf meal must be consumed dry and never suspended in a liquid.
- ✂ Calf meal should contain an animal protein source e.g. fishmeal or skim milk powder.
- ✂ Calves must have access to clean drinking water.
- ✂ Intake of meal can be encouraged by placing a handful of meal in the bucket after the calf has drunk milk from it.

### Example of a calf starter meal

Raw materials	kg	Composition
Yellow maize, roughly ground	66	Crude protein 16.7%
Oil-cake meal	16	ME 11.52 MJ/ kg
Fish meal	6	P 0.7 %
Lucerne meal	11	Ca 0.7 %
Kimtrafos 12 Grande/PhosSure 12	1	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100 kg</b>	