

Pre-Calving Equipment List: For Cows & Heifers

First and foremost: this checklist is for reference only and is **NOT** a substitute for guidance from an experienced veterinarian.

Print a copy and review it with your vet to determine what is necessary for a safe and healthy delivery. Being prepared before calving can make a significant difference for both mother and calf. This practical checklist is designed to be a handy resource to have on hand before labor begins.

Disclosure: Links in this document are Amazon affiliate links. As an Amazon Associate, we earn from qualifying purchases at no extra cost to you.

Basic Handling & Calving Supplies

- [Slip-style halter \(in case mom needs to be restrained for an IV or assisted delivery\)](#)
- [Chains and handles for pulling calves](#)
- [Calf jack for difficult pulls](#)
- [OB gloves](#)
- [Lubricant](#)
- [Iodine for the navel](#)

Calf Care

- Inforce 3 (ask your Vet)
- Calf Guard (ask your Vet)
- [NurseMate ASAP tubes](#)
- [Calf bottle and nipples](#)
- [Tubing Bottle for weak calves](#)
- [Lamb tube \(ideal for preemies or very small calves\)](#)
- Towels to dry the calf (Salvation army or garage sales are great sources)
- [Calf jacket](#)
- [Heating pad](#)
- [Heating blanket \(depending on climate and season\)](#)
- [150-gram colostrum replacement \(critical if mom is lost or immediate colostrum is needed\)](#)

Medications & Health Supplies

- Dexamethasone (for swollen tongue from a rough calving or hard pull / for cow and calf) Ask Vet
- [BovikalC boluses](#)

- Bovikalc gun
- [CMPK calcium tablets](#)
- B-complex vitamins (Ask your Vet)
- Vitamin E (Ask your Vet)
- [Cattle Thermometer](#)
- Keto strips <https://www.leedstone.com/p/keto-test-8482/?srsltid=AfmBOopPrLX6fluOMEUk08pesqWBF6B1A7s460lqWjc-BVj8ufDjf9wA>
- [Keto Monitor](#)
- IV tubing kit <https://www.leedstone.com/p/jorvet-8482-large-animal-disposable-iv-set/>
- Two bottles of calcium (CMPK) (Ask your Vet)
- Two bottles of propylene glycol (Ask your Vet)
- [Two-pack Fleet enemas](#)
- [Replenish Electrolytes \(available in gallon jugs or individual bottles\)](#)
- [Molasses water for post-calving hydration](#)

Equipment & Setup

- [Calf jack](#)
- [Sled or wagon to move calves](#)
- Milking setup fully assembled and tested: stand, bucket, claw, and pulsator

Calving Area

- Clean pen with shavings and straw
- Fresh water
- Draft-free, quiet location where mom feels safe and can be confined if assistance is needed

Planning Ahead

- **Schedule a well-cow visit with your veterinarian before calving.** Ensure your vet has no concerns and review your expectations for labor. Many veterinarians prefer that you are an existing client before responding to an on-farm emergency, so planning ahead is key. It's important to work with a veterinarian who has practical experience and specific knowledge of dairy cattle.
- Notify your vet when she goes into labor so they are aware and on call.
- If a vet isn't available, identify a knowledgeable neighbor who can assist in an emergency.
- Watch reputable instructional videos on proper calf presentation, labor stages, and expected timelines.

Important Note:

One of the most common—and preventable—causes of calf loss is allowing cows or heifers to push for hours

when the calf is not positioned correctly. Being prepared and knowing when to step in—or call for help—saves lives.

If you're not comfortable assisting your cow, make sure someone experienced is available to help. Your cow and her calf depend on it. 🧡 🐮