



Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Two Heads Are Better Than One:

A Starter Guide to Pairing Dairy Calves



This series of articles is a seven-part starter guide for pairing or group-housing preweaned dairy calves. Throughout this guide, we cover best practices to promote good health and welfare in calves raised in pairs or small groups.

All articles within the guide are meant to be printed out and kept together as a series. The tabs at the top of the documents help readers flip to the section of interest.

Topics

1. [Why all the fuss about pair housing?](#)
2. [Benchmarks for calf health before pair housing](#)
3. [Hygiene practices](#)
4. [Options for housing pairs or groups](#)
5. [Grouping strategies](#)
6. [Feeding practices and reducing cross sucking](#)
7. [Disbudding and dehorning considerations](#)

Authors

This guide was created by **Jennifer Van Os**, PhD, with contributions from:

- **Sarah Adcock**, PhD, Department of Animal & Dairy Sciences, UW-Madison
- **Joao Costa**, PhD, Department of Animal & Food Sciences, University of Kentucky
- **Courtney Halbach**, MBA, Department of Medical Sciences, School of Veterinary Medicine, UW-Madison
- **Tina Kohlman**, MS, UW-Madison Division of Extension Fond du Lac County
- **Emily Miller-Cushon**, PhD, Department of Animal Sciences, University of Florida
- **Theresa Ollivett**, DVM, PhD, Department of Medical Sciences, School of Veterinary Medicine, UW-Madison
- **Donald Sockett**, DVM, PhD, Wisconsin Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory, UW-Madison
- **Sandy Stuttgart**, DVM, UW-Madison Division of Extension Taylor County

Version 1 of this series was published November 2020 to February 2021. https://animalwelfare.cals.wisc.edu/calf_pairing/