

Practical tips for feeding young stock this spring

Spring means new arrivals, and for anyone raising young stock, those first few weeks can be some of the most important.

Whether you're caring for calves, lambs or other young animals, good early nutrition helps support healthy growth and development. But getting young stock off to a strong start isn't only about what you feed. Consistency, preparation, hygiene and close observation all play an important role.

Here are a few practical feeding considerations to keep in mind this spring.

Start with good nutrition

Young animals have significant nutritional demands as they grow and develop. Colostrum and maternal milk are important in the early stages, but there may be times when supplementary or replacement feeding is required.

Orphaned animals, multiple births, low milk supply or other circumstances can all create a need for additional nutrition. Having an appropriate milk replacer on hand can provide a practical option when natural milk is unavailable or insufficient.

Consistency counts

When it comes to feeding young stock, consistency is important.

Keeping feeding times, quantities and preparation methods consistent can help establish a reliable routine. If changes to a feeding program are required, avoid making unnecessary sudden changes and monitor young animals closely as they adjust.

The same goes for milk replacer. Stick to the recommended concentration rather than assuming that adding extra powder will provide extra nutrition.

Mix according to directions

Milk replacers are formulated to be prepared at specific mixing rates, so always follow the directions provided for the individual product.

Measure both powder and water accurately and pay attention to recommended water temperature and feeding volumes. Correct preparation helps ensure young animals receive the nutrition the product has been formulated to provide.

If you’re preparing multiple feeds, using the same measuring equipment and process each time can also help maintain consistency.

Keep it clean

Good hygiene is an important part of any young stock feeding program.

Bottles, teats, buckets and mixing equipment should be cleaned thoroughly between feeds. Milk residue can quickly build up in feeding equipment, so establishing a simple cleaning routine can make this easier to manage, particularly when feeding multiple animals.

Fresh, clean water should also be available as young animals develop and begin transitioning towards solid feed.

Keep an eye on your young stock

Feeding guides are useful, but they don't replace regularly checking the animals in front of you.

Keep an eye on appetite, behaviour, body condition and general development. Changes in feeding behaviour or an animal that isn't progressing as expected can be an early indication that something needs attention.

If you're unsure about the nutritional needs of an individual animal, seek advice from your veterinarian or animal nutrition professional.

Be prepared this spring

Young animals don't always arrive according to plan, so having the right feeding supplies ready can make life a little easier when

supplementary feeding is needed.

The iO Milk Replacer range provides practical nutrition options for young stock when replacement or supplementary milk feeding is required.

Speak to your local iO stockist about choosing the right option for your animals and always follow the feeding directions provided on pack.

A little preparation and good feeding practices can go a long way towards giving young stock a strong start.