

REFERÊNCIA:

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FACTORS AFFECTING THE FIRST SUCKLING LATENCY IN NELORE CALVES

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The absence of or delay in the ingestion of colostrum increases the risk of beef calf death. Cows presenting big udder/teats and poor maternal behaviour, usually delay the colostrum intake, as well as new-born weakness. The objective of this study was to analyse the first suckling latency in Nelore calves (*Bos taurus indicus*) and its underlying factors. Two hundred and two cows and their calves were observed in three beef cattle farms in São Paulo State, Brazil. Data were collected during the day of birth until the first suckling, using direct and continuous focal sampling. The following variables were calculated: latency of the cow's first trial to stand up (LTS); latency to stand up (LS); difference between standing up and suckling (DSS); first suckling latency (FSL); time taking care of the calf (TCC). An analysis of variance was performed and correlation coefficients were calculated, which led to the following conclusions: (1) there were individual differences in LTS and LS; (3) more active calves had low FSL; (2) udder formation and teat size have affected FSL; (4) LTL and LL seemed to be good indicators of calf agility, they could be used to facilitate the diagnosis of problems during post-calving period; (5) experienced cows had higher TCC, they were more able to help their offspring to suckle, decreasing their FSL.

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