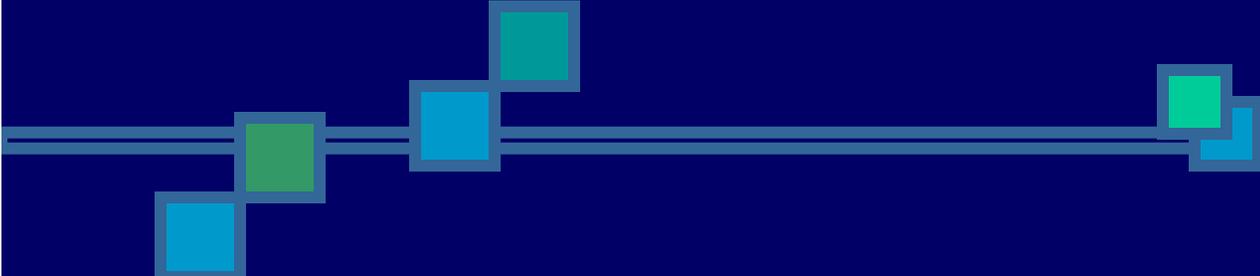


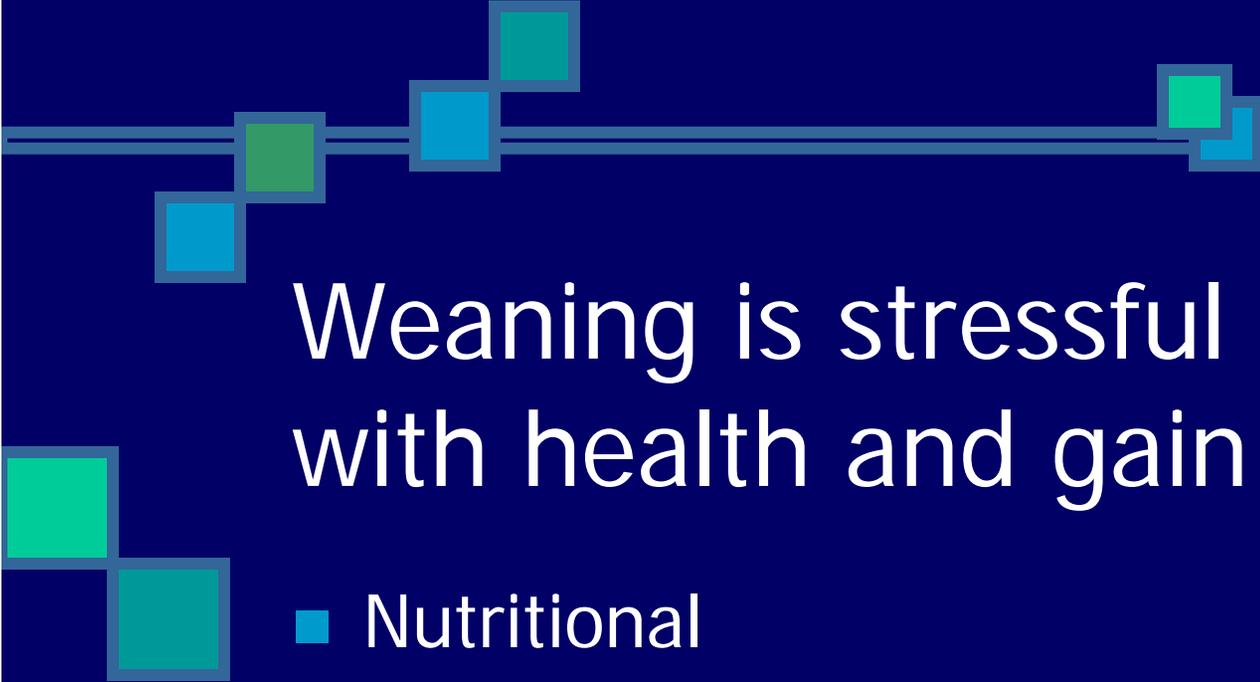
Weaning Calves thoughts and techniques





Weaning is critical management practice

- Breeding efficiency
 - Feed utilization
 - Feedlot performance
 - Carcass merit
 - Marketing
- 

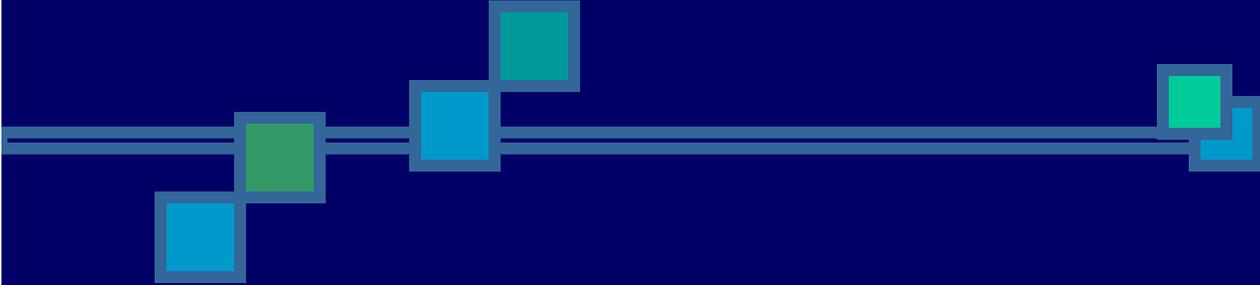


Weaning is stressful period with health and gain impacts

- Nutritional
 - Diet change, low intake, dehydration
 - Social
 - Dam-calf bond, anxiety, security
 - Environmental
 - Mud, dust, rain, snow, heat, cold
 - Physical
 - Castration, dehorn, bawling, standing, hauling
- 

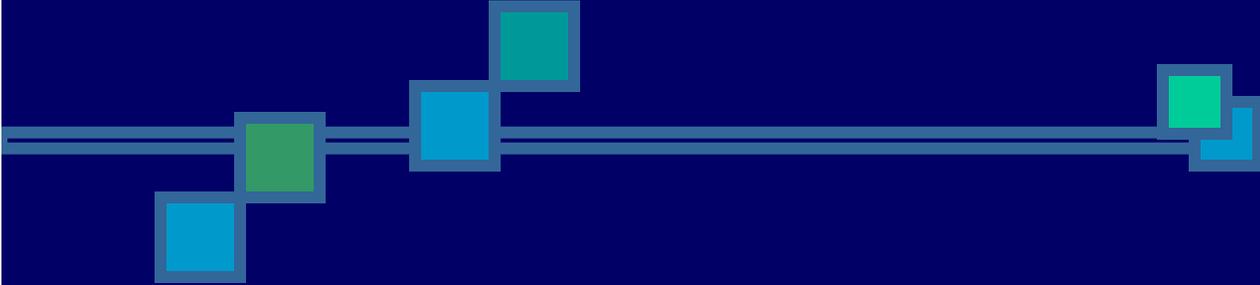
Reduce stress by weaning preparation and methods





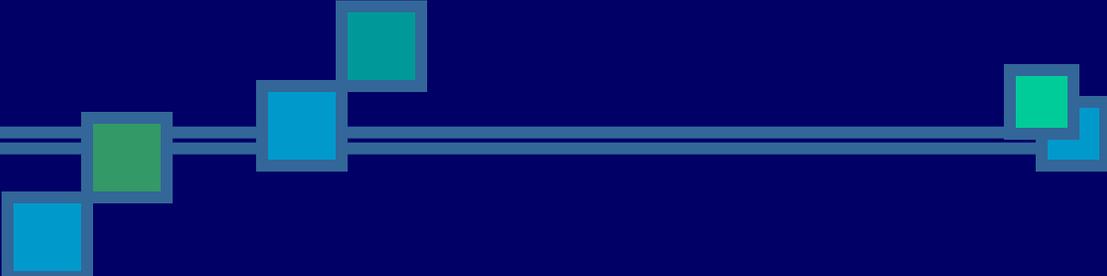
Preparation

- Vaccination
 - Respiratory, Clostridia, Parasites
 - Pen
 - Dust, Mud, Fence, design
 - Feed & Water
 - Pre-wean supplementation, creep
 - Balanced, safe, palatable ration
- 

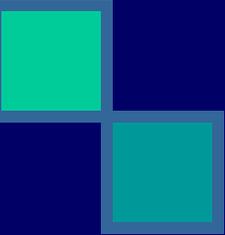


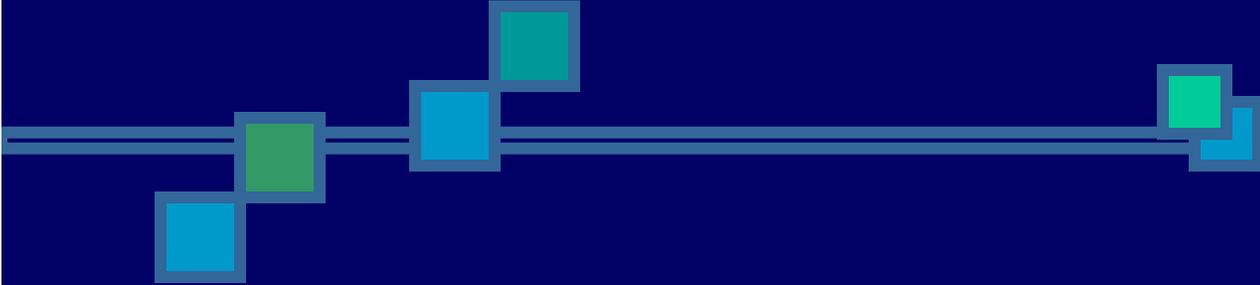
Weaning Alternatives

- Natural or imposed
 - On truck, pasture or in lot
 - Total separation or fence line contact
 - Companion and trainer cows
 - Gradual or abrupt
 - Age of calf
- 

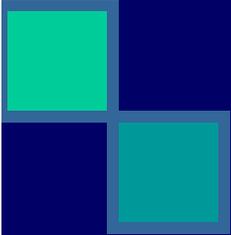
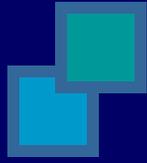


Weaning on Pasture

- 
- Low stress alternative to lot weaning
 - Minimizes nutritional and environmental stress
 - High quality pasture is critical, supplemental feeding may be desirable
 - Multi-wire electric fence suitable for cattle with electric fence exposure
 - Acquaint herd to pasture and then remove cows leaving calves in familiar place
 - Gains may be low and treatments more difficult
- 

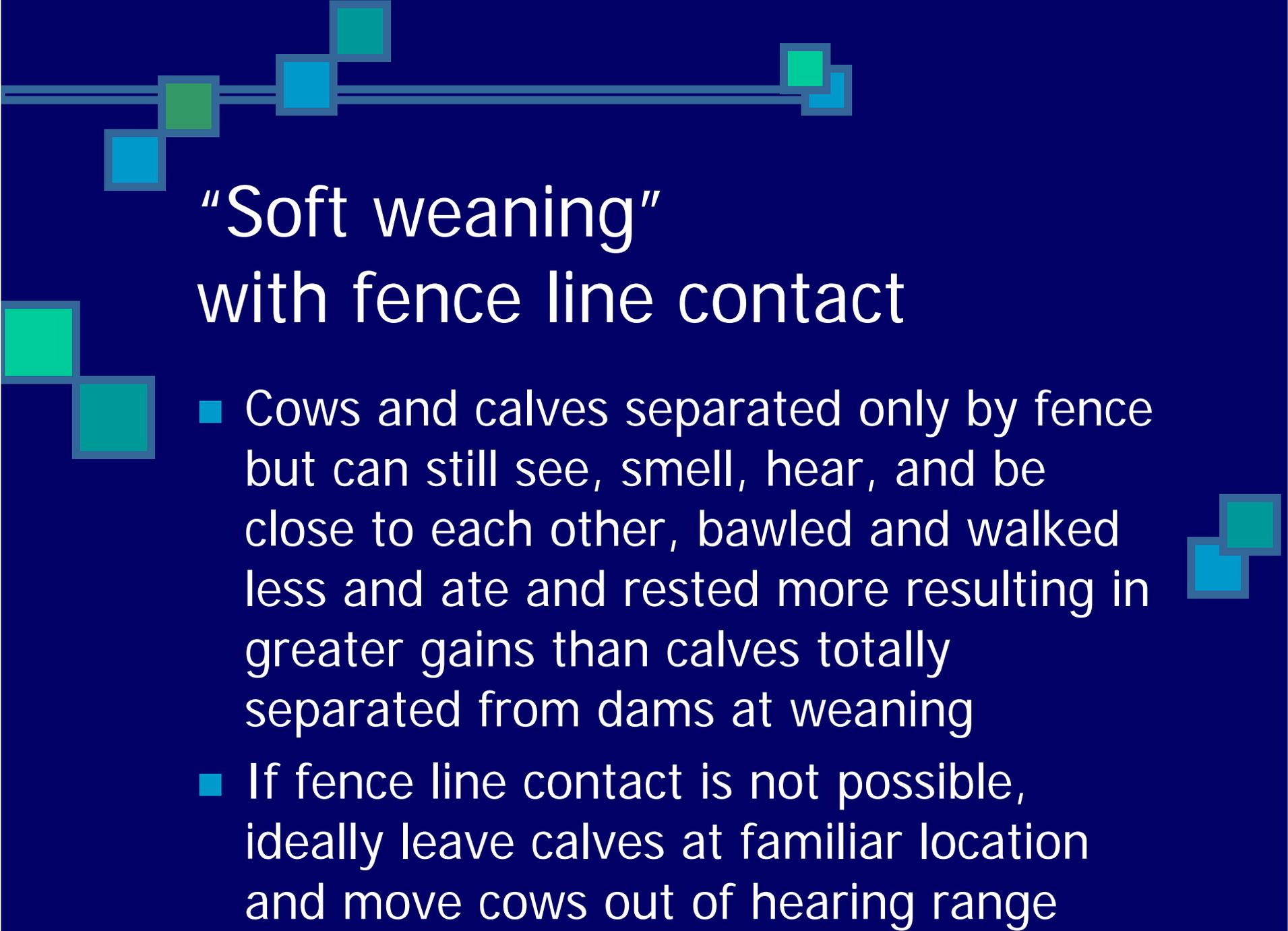


Pasture Options

- 
- For fall weaning clip or graze pastures 50-70 days prior
 - Fertilized tame cool season grass often best quality late in year
 - Palatable high digestible fiber by-products work well to supplement and bunk break
 - Grazing period in fall may be limited to 30-40 days
- 

Pasture Weaning Applications

	Maddox Cattle Co	Ivoma Red Angus	UM Forage Research
Calving	Feb	Feb-Mar	Spring
Weaning	June	Sept	Fall
Forage	Meadow	Ryegrass	Fescue
Supplement	Byproduct	none	none
Length	45	40	20
Gain	NA	1.8	1.1



“Soft weaning” with fence line contact

- Cows and calves separated only by fence but can still see, smell, hear, and be close to each other, bawled and walked less and ate and rested more resulting in greater gains than calves totally separated from dams at weaning
- If fence line contact is not possible, ideally leave calves at familiar location and move cows out of hearing range

Fence line Weaning Comparisons

	UCaSFREC Fence line vs Separate	SackWCVM Fence line vs Remote
Weight Difference 2wks	+23 lbs	+2
Weight Difference 10wks	+26 lbs	0
ADG	+.37	
Sickness	=	=

Fencing Options ?

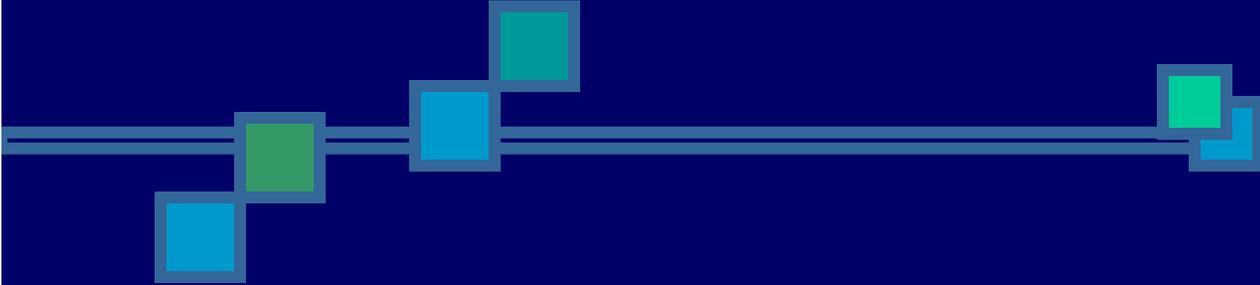


- Double Fence
- Netting
- 4-5 wire Electric
- 2-3 wire Electric
 - Calves with electric fence training
- Cows in adjacent corral

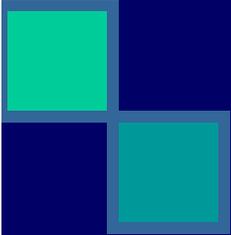
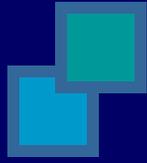
Companion or Trainer Cows



- Placing a calm older cow with groups of calves at weaning may have some benefit in calming calves and helping them find feed and water
- Trials however did not identify performance benefits with the presence of “trainer” cows and minor and conflicting behavior differences



Gradual “two-step” Weaning

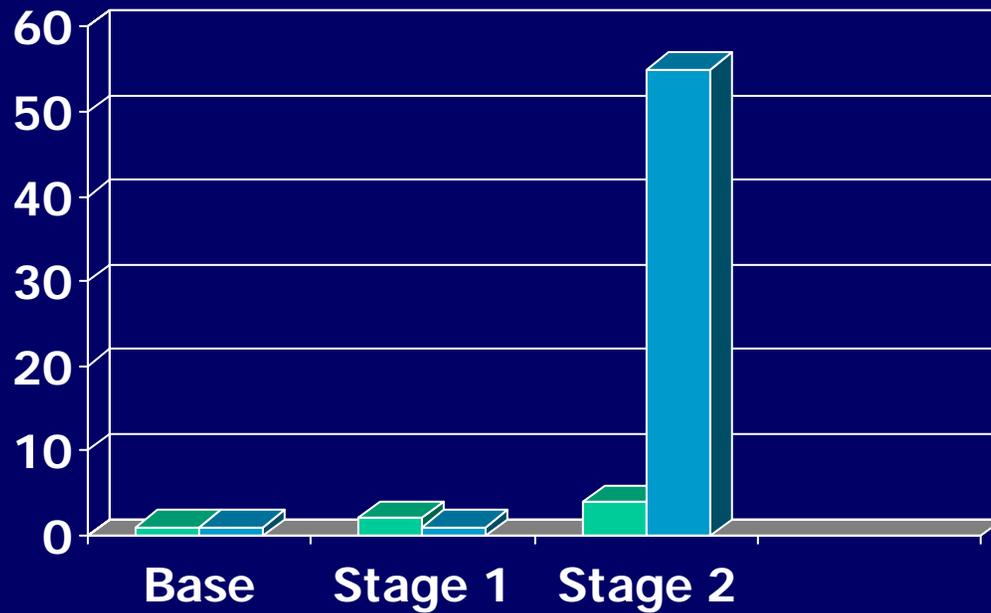
- 
- Two stage method of breaking weaning process into the elimination of nursing first followed by separation from dam second
 - Studies show the method significantly reduces bawling (85%), walking (80% while increasing time eating(25%))
- 

How it works



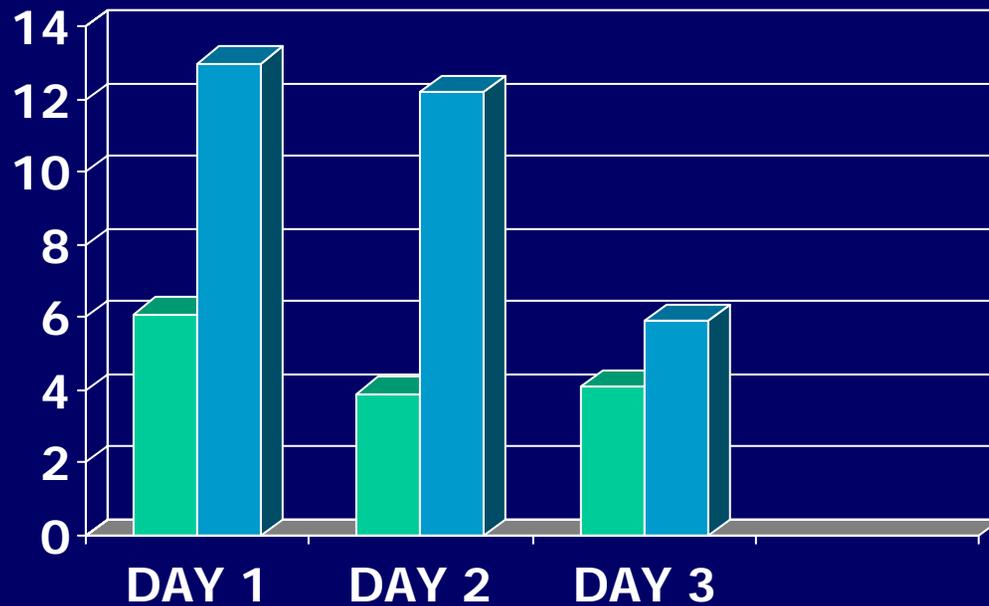
- A lightweight plastic nose tag is put in calves that prevents them from sucking while still able to graze and drink
- After 4-7 days the calves are separated from cows and nose tags removed for reuse

Calling By Calves (calls/hr)



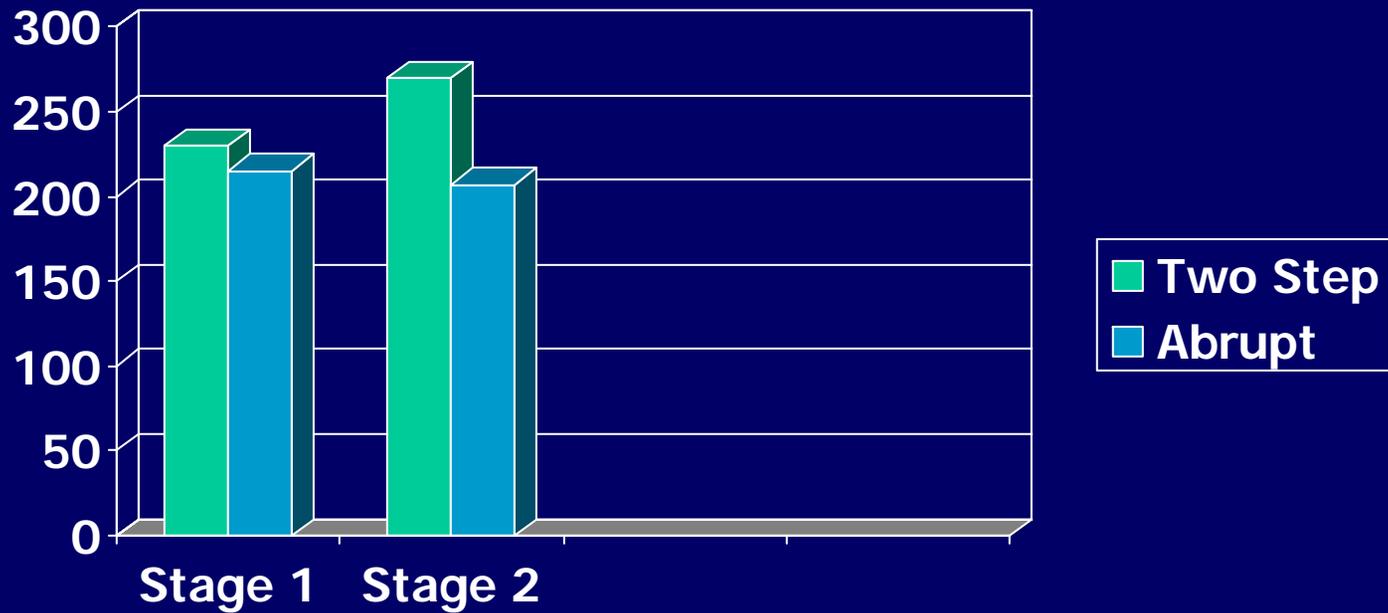
Two Step
Abrupt

Distance Walked (miles)



Two Step
Abrupt

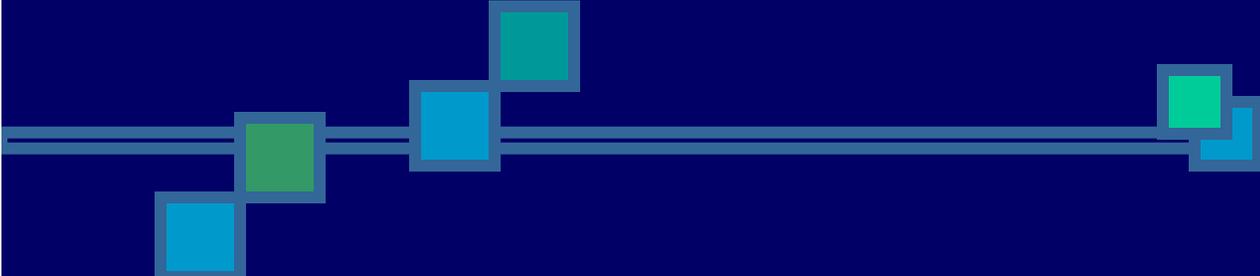
Eating by Calves (min/day)



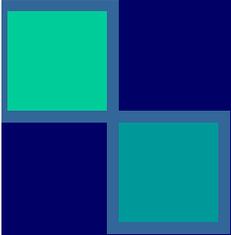
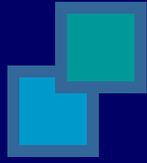
Two Step Guidelines

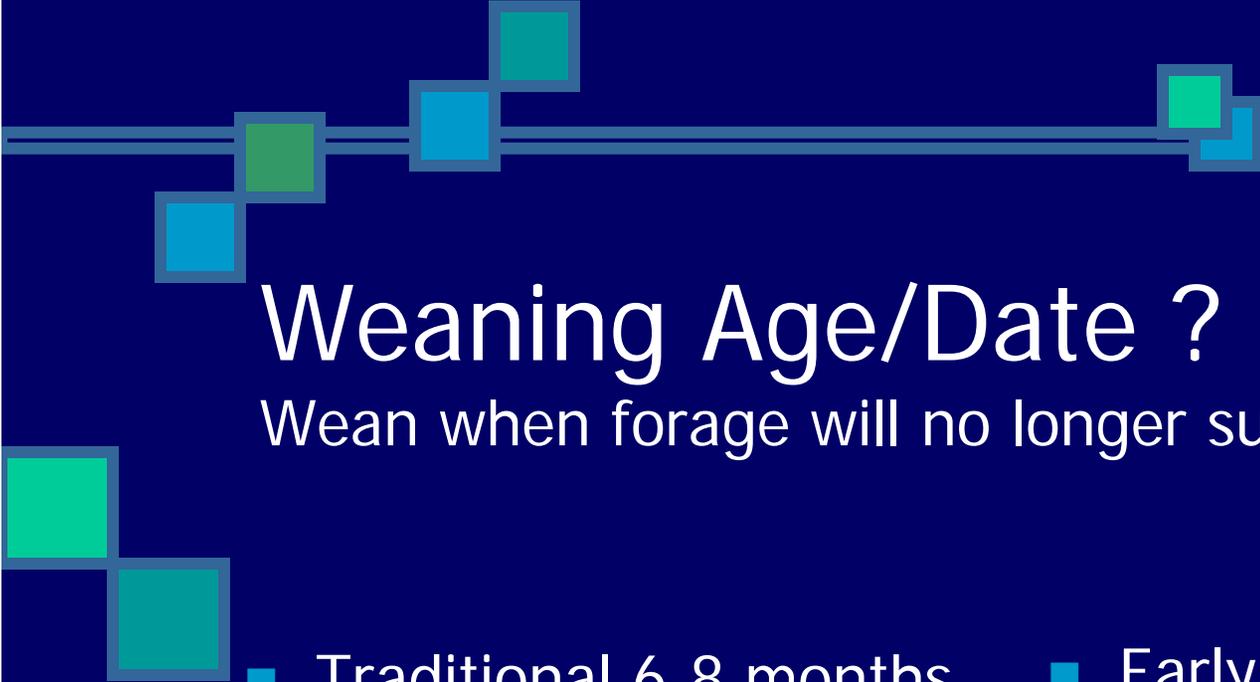


- 4 day minimum
8 day preferred
- Eliminate extra handling by inserting when vaccination, weighing, etc
- Retention rate about 95%
- Cost \$1.00+



Lot Weaning

- 
- Traditional method for on farm backgrounding
 - Well drained pens (approx 100 sq ft) with calf proof fence
 - Corner or fence line water
 - Bunks in fence line or perpendicular
 - Dry/bedded resting area
 - Palatable/roughage receiving ration
 - Health monitoring
- 



Weaning Age/Date ?

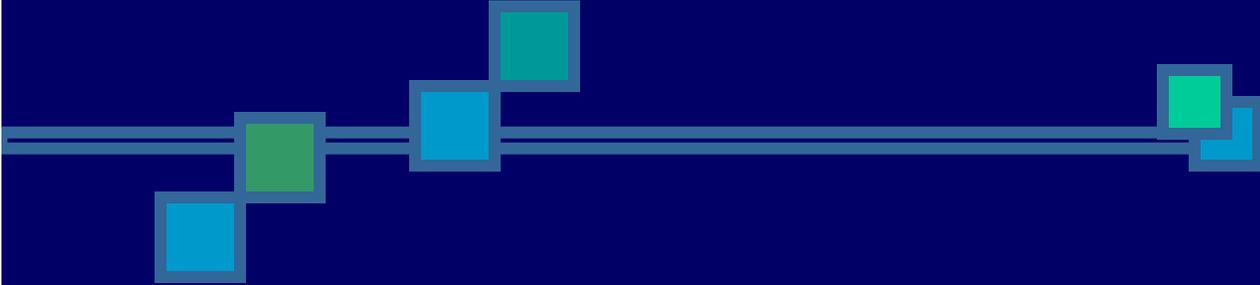
Wean when forage will no longer support lactating cow

■ Traditional 6-8 months

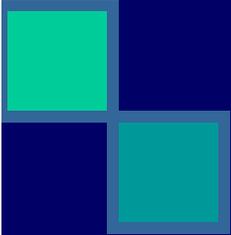
- Less stressful to calf
- More marketable at weaning
- Fewer days on feed to finish and lower input cost

■ Early 3-5 months

- Conserve forage and cow condition under drought
 - Accelerate finish timing (-30 days)
 - Possible greater marbling and better feed to gain
- 



Summary

- 
- Fence line, pasture, and two-step weaning methods can reduce stress in calves at weaning resulting in faster starts on feed and fewer health concerns
 - Economic value depends on current impacts of stress on health and gain and the effort and costs to implement
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