

## Protocol For Dealing With Sick Calves

Establishing a protocol for dealing with sick calves is important to keep everyone consistent with each other. Because calves can lose so much water in a short period of time, it is necessary for all employees to be able to diagnose and treat calves quickly and efficiently to prevent mortality. Evaluation of calves should include scores given for **scours, respiration** and **appearance**.

Scoring of scours should be scored on a 1 to 5 basis.

Scours				
1	2	3	4	5
Normal Faeces. Consistency of pudding	Slightly less firm e.g. yoghurt	Considered scours. Consistency of syrup, loose to watery with a strong odour	Anything more fluid than syrup. Consistency of apple juice with faecal matter still seen	Consistency of water with no faecal matter or with mucous and/or blood

Respiration				
1	2	3	4	5
Normal breathing, no problems	Slight cough, runny nose but regular breathing	Has moderate cough and rapid breathing	Severe, frequent cough and rapid breathing	Severe, chronic, cough with irregular breathing

Appearance				
1	2	3	4	5
Alert and active	Droopy ears. Slightly unresponsive	Moderately depressed. Head and ears drooping	Depressed with drooping ears and head. No interest in getting up	Flat on its side

All scores should be added up for each day and when scores are over a certain number, the protocol should consist of taking a temperature reading (normal temperature 37°C - 38°C. A temperature reading above 38°C may indicate a fever caused by a bacterial or viral infection requiring veterinary assistance), treating with oral rehydration solution and/or veterinary treatment. This will ensure proper consistent treatment for all calves and should decrease mortality.

*Reference: Penn State University. College of Agricultural Sciences.  
<https://extension.psu.edu/electrolytes-for-dairy-calves>*