

MANAGEMENT OF COW AROUND PARTURITION

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The success of a dairy farm largely depends upon the care and management of the dairy animals. All the operations of the farm should be planned and performed with great caution. The care of an animal should start from its embryonic stage if you want more production from it at adult life. So the management of a pregnant animal must be done with special attention before, during and after parturition. Any small mistake during this time can cost large economic loss for the farmer or producer. In this article, we will discuss the management steps that should be followed at the time of parturition of dairy cattle.

Before parturition

- ❖ Firstly, the most important thing is to know the probable date of parturition of the cow. The average gestation period of a cow is 282 days. But it may vary from 270 to 290 days. The farmer can easily calculate the day of parturition from the day of artificial insemination or natural mating. Proper care and management planning should also start accordingly.
- ❖ The nutrient requirement of the animal changes with the progression of pregnancy. Vitamins, minerals and other nutrients should be provided in optimum quantity. It is better to consult with a veterinary doctor to formulate the ration of the animal in different stages. Very often, deficiency of calcium leads to milk fever after parturition.

- ❖ It is very essential to protect the cow from wound or injury. They should be kept away from bulls or mounting cows. It is better to keep them isolated from the whole herd.
- ❖ When the gestation period is near to be completed, the cow should be examined regularly for the symptoms of calving. It includes swelling of the vulva, dropping away ligaments around the tail, swelling of the udder, thick mucus discharge from vulva and uneasiness of the animal.
- ❖ When the symptoms are prominent the cow should be shifted immediately to the calving pen. The calving pen should be cleaned with disinfectant, well ventilated and well bedded.

During parturition

- ❖ Normally the parturition process takes around 2 to 3 hours. In the case of primiparous animals, it may take 4 to 5 hours or more. During parturition, the animal should not be disturbed but should be observed from a distance.
- ❖ Generally, domestic animals do not need any assistance from a human. But it is also advisable that someone should be present all the time if any emergency situation arises. If the condition goes beyond the control of the farmer, veterinary doctors must be consulted immediately. Sometimes, the calf is presented in an abnormal condition which is termed as dystocia. In this condition, veterinary help is very much essential.

After parturition

- ❖ After parturition, the genitalia and tail should be washed with warm water containing some crystals of potassium permanganate or Neem leaves boiled in water. This antiseptic wash is very much essential to avoid contamination of pathogens. Just after parturition, the immunity of the animal goes very down and the animal becomes very much susceptible to diseases.
- ❖ The animals should be kept warm. It is advisable to provide some warm water mixed with molasses to the animal.
- ❖ The udder is swollen before calving. It should be protected from injury. The animal should be milked after parturition.

- ❖ The placenta generally expels within 2 to 4 hours. Beyond 8 to 12 hours, the veterinary doctor should be consulted. Care should be taken to avoid ingestion of the placenta by the animal. It can result in excess protein intake that can cause a decrease in milk yield.
- ❖ The diet should be formulated carefully after parturition. After parturition, the cow starts milk production and there is a huge physiological change in the body of the animal. So, the feed provided to the animals should fulfill all the need of the animal. It should also be remembered that the calf is totally dependent on its mother at this time. Care should be taken if we want the calf to be a productive animal in later life.

Conclusion

It is very much clear that taking care of the cow around parturition is important not only for the animal itself but also for the future generation. Necessary managerial steps should be taken to protect the animal from stressful conditions and diseases in this critical period. It will ensure a good productive performance from the animal and strengthen the economy of the farmer.

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