Dairy Youngstock Supervisor

Dairy farming

Job title	Dairy Youngstock Supervisor
Department	Dairy farming
Reports to	Herd Manager or Farm Manager
Direct reports	Calf rearers and feeders
Location	*[To be confirmed by the employer]*
Contract type	*[Permanent / fixed-term / other]*
Salary and benefits	*[To be confirmed by the employer]*

Job purpose

The Youngstock Supervisor is responsible for rearing healthy calves and heifers from birth until they are in calf and ready to join the milking herd. The role leads the calf team, puts feeding and health protocols into practice, and hits targets for growth, survival and age at first calving.

Key responsibilities

Calf rearing

- Make sure every newborn calf gets enough good-quality colostrum soon after birth
- Carry out navel care, identification and registration for all new calves
- Manage milk or milk replacer feeding and offer starter feed and water from early on
- Wean calves to the agreed protocol based on age, weight and starter intake
- Weigh or measure calves regularly and compare growth with targets

Health and biosecurity

- Deliver the vaccination, worming and disbudding programme on time
- Spot and treat scours, pneumonia and other common diseases early, following vet advice
- Check colostrum quality and test calves for passive immunity
- Isolate sick calves to limit the spread of disease
- Keep pens and feeding equipment clean and enforce biosecurity rules

Heifer nutrition and development

- Apply the agreed milk, starter and forage rations for each growth stage
- Work with the nutritionist to adjust rations for season, growth and health
- Track feed intake and body condition in heifer groups
- Bring heifers to target weight and size for first service
- Coordinate with the breeding team on heat detection and service of maiden heifers

Housing and welfare

- Keep calf and heifer housing clean, dry, well bedded and well ventilated

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- Plan groups and moves to reduce stress and competition
- Meet national animal welfare codes and any farm assurance standards

Team leadership

- Lead, train and motivate calf rearers and feeders
- Set daily routines, shift plans and rotas
- Coach staff on the job and build their skills

Records and reporting

- Record births, colostrum feeds, weights, treatments and feed use accurately
- Use herd software or manual logs to track performance against targets
- Report trends and problems to management and contribute to farm meetings
- Liaise regularly with the vet and nutritionist on youngstock matters

Qualifications and experience

Essential

- A diploma or degree in an animal-related subject such as animal or veterinary science
- Several years' hands-on experience rearing dairy calves and heifers
- Proven record of low calf losses and meeting growth targets
- Experience leading a team on a commercial dairy or livestock farm
- Sound understanding of calf nutrition, disease prevention and welfare

Desirable

- Experience on a large, well-run dairy rearing unit
- Training in the safe use of veterinary medicines
- Experience with automatic calf feeders
- Experience of weighing and growth monitoring systems

Skills and attributes

- Leadership, training and motivation of staff
- A keen eye for changes in behaviour and early signs of disease
- Practical problem solving
- Confident use of herd software and digital records
- Clear communication and reporting
- Organisation and attention to detail

Measures of success

- Calf mortality to weaning
- Heifer losses from weaning to calving
- Average daily liveweight gain against target
- Passive immunity success rate
- Treatment rates for scours and pneumonia
- Age at first calving

Working conditions and safety

Hands-on work in calf and heifer housing in all weathers, with early starts, weekend rota work and some on-call duty for calvings and sick calves. PPE, including gloves and boots, is worn and strict hygiene rules apply.

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- Follow health and safety rules and safe systems of work, and wear the correct PPE
- Follow animal welfare, biosecurity and medicine-use procedures at all times
- Report hazards, accidents, near misses and concerns promptly

This job description outlines the main duties of the role. It is not a complete list, and the employer may update it as the business changes, in consultation with the jobholder.

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