

But I just wanted some milk!

A brief introduction to **cross-sucking** in calves



"Douglas Likes Francis' Ear" by Marji Beach

What does cross-sucking look like?

- Calves suck on body parts of their fellow pen-mates, but do not receive any milk¹
- Targets include ears, mouth, tail, navel, groin area, and udder area²

Why do calves do this?

- Cross-sucking does not occur when calves are raised with their mothers!¹
- Perhaps an abnormal version of a calf's innate need to suckle³
- Cross-sucking is stimulated by the taste of milk⁴



"New born Friesian red and white calf being licked by mama cow" by Uberprutser

What's the big deal? → Cross-sucking is associated with diseases such as **mastitis** (udder inflammation), and the development of ear and navel **abscesses**⁵ (collection of pus)
Thus, this calls for prevention methods!



"Hay balls" by Nikos Koutoulas

Prevention Suggestion #1

Prolong feeding time by giving calves hay during feeding⁶, and slowing the milk delivery rate³

Prevention Suggestion #2

Frequently regroup cattle so the bond between the sucker calf and the sucked calf is broken!⁷



"Scoring on this group of cattle" by MUExtension417



"Cows lined up" by allispossible.org.uk

Prevention Suggestion #3

Cattle need their space! Housing space of at least 1.8m² is recommended⁸

Prevention Suggestion #4

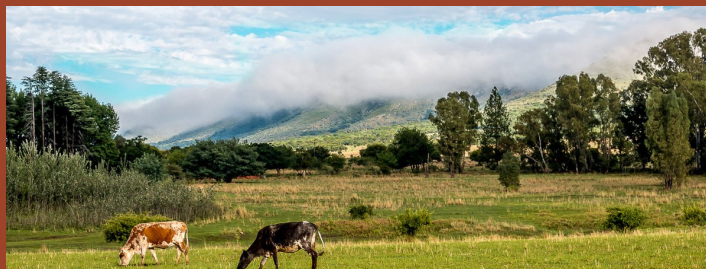
Provide calves with **artificial teats** in their pens to suck on, instead of their neighbors²



"Teat Time" by Wildlife Terry

All for the Cattle!

At the end of the day, we just want to keep cattle healthy and act in their best interest! Preventing cross-sucking is a crucial step in doing so!



"Happy Cows" by DarwIn

References

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