



Observation



Isolation

## 1. Observations

- Regular observations are required to determine how labor is progressing, when to provide assistance or when to seek help from a veterinarian.
- Track calving progression on a record-keeping log.
- Make sure personnel update each other at shift changes.

## 2. Isolation

Most cows will exhibit variable behavior, such as isolation. Other behavioral changes, including discomfort and uneasiness, will not be exhibited by the cow until the parturition process begins.

## 3. Parturition



### Stage 1: Dilatation

This stage, which lasts an average of 6-8 hours (but can last several hours more for heifers), begins with initial labor dilatation and contractions. The cow may show signs of discomfort by kicking at her belly and becoming restless due to contractions. Some clinical signs of this stage include a lifted tail, bloody discharge and discharge of fluids. Only observe the cow and her progress during this stage.

### Stage 2

In this stage, which lasts an average of 1-2 hours for cows and an average of 2-4 hours for heifers, the cervix dilates fully, the cow may lie down, her contractions will increase and signs of abdominal pushing will be obvious. This stage begins when the calf passes the cervix and enters the birth canal, with the water bag visible in front of the calf. This stage ends with the delivery of the calf.

### Stage 3

During this stage, the cow passes the placenta or fetal membranes. This stage lasts up to 24 hours. Retained fetal membranes (RF) occur as the result of this stage extending past 24 hours.



### If you assist:

- Wash vulva and perineal area with disinfectant soap before assisting. If the cow defecates, repeat this step.
- Use clean, disposable, long-sleeved gloves.
- Determine the presentation, position and posture of the fetus.
- Correct the presentation before forced extraction.

- Use plenty of lubricant to assist delivery.
- Use clean, disinfected obstetric chains and equipment.
- Use proper chain placement: a double half hitch with the chain on top of the leg.
- All traction placed on the calf should coincide with the mother having a contraction and pushing.
- Please be patient.
- If no progress is made within 30 minutes, call for help.

### When to assist:

- If Stage 2 does not progress normally.
- If the calf does not arrive within 65 minutes of the amniotic sac or feet appearing outside the vulva.
- When abnormal posture is evident.
- During backwards presentations.



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