



Common Miracle of Birth Questions:

For additional FAQs please visit www.mvma.org/mobc

Dairy Cows

How much milk will this cow produce?

- ☞ Holstein will give about 8 gallons of milk a day

How long before this calf will be able to produce milk?

- ☞ In order for a cow to produce milk, she needs to have a calf first. This will take about 2 years

What are they putting on that calf's belly?

- ☞ The calf's umbilical cord is dipped in iodine
 - ☞ Calves have a weak immune system
 - ☞ Protects the calf from having bacteria get into their abdomen

Why do you take the calf away from the cow?

- ☞ Dairy cattle produce more milk than the calf can consume
 - ☞ This is different in beef cattle
 - ☞ To make sure calves get adequate colostrum (nutrient rich milk) amount and quality. Their immune system is heavily dependent on colostrum.
 - ☞ To bond with humans so they are able to trust us.

More facts on dairy cows:

- ☞ A Holstein calf weighs about 85-110 pounds on average & are the most common breed
- ☞ Cows are milked on average for 3-4 years and 2-3 times a day
- ☞ The average cow drinks about a bath-tub full of water (30-50 gallons worth) a day
- ☞ Minnesota is the 6th largest dairy producing state in the U.S.

Swine

Gestation length

- ☞ 114 days (+/- 2 days)

Why are the sow's kept in a cage?

- ☞ Keep both sow and piglets clean and comfortable
- ☞ Protect the piglets from the sow laying on them and it is easy to keep clean
 - ☞ Piglets need a clean, dry, warm, comfortable surface
- ☞ Moved to these a few days before giving birth

How many piglets are there usually in a litter?

- ☞ The sow's uterus is capable of carrying 12-14 live fetuses
- ☞ The average litter size in the US is 10

How long does farrowing last

- ☞ Dependent upon litter size
 - ☞ Averages out to be about 15 minutes between each piglet
 - ☞ Usually take less than 2.5 hours

Is it ok that the piglets are coming out backwards?

- ☞ Yes, about ½ of the piglets are presented head first and about ½ are presented tail first

Sheep/Lambs

Gestation length

- ☞ 147 days

Normal behavior

- ☞ Ewe likes to have her lambs right in front of their nose
- ☞ Ewes develop a very strong bond with their young

How many lambs does a Ewe usually have?

- ☞ Ewes normally have twins but can have 1-4 depending on breed and time of year (spring more than fall)

Why do the lambs have long tails?

- ☞ The tail length is a highly heritable trait
- ☞ They have not been docked yet

Why dock the tails?

- ☞ To prevent fecal material from building up
- ☞ Prevent fly strike
- ☞ Done to protect the health and hygiene of sheep

Goats/Kids**Do just the males have horns?**

- ☞ No, both females and males can have horns

Gestation Length

- ☞ 150 days

How many kids is that doe going to have?

- ☞ It is not determined by how big the doe is
 - ☞ Does become pretty large no matter how many they are having with putting on 75% of the weight in the last 30 days

What will happen to them after they leave?

- ☞ Use dairy goats for their milk (to make cheese) and to drink
- ☞ Meat goats—the most popular meat in the world.

Poultry**What breed are these chickens?**

- ☞ Hy-Line W36

How old are chickens when they start to lay eggs?

- ☞ Chickens start laying eggs around 18-22 weeks of age.

How many eggs does a chicken lay every year?

- ☞ Young chickens lay 250-280 eggs per year. On average a hen will lay an egg every 25-26 hours.

How old can a chicken be to still lay eggs?

- ☞ A healthy hen can lay eggs for 10-12 years but slow down as they age.

What is molting?

- ☞ Molting is the natural process when a chicken loses its feathers and re-grows new ones. It happens about once a year and lasts for 14-16 weeks. Egg production slows during molting.

Do you need a rooster for a hen to lay eggs?

- ☞ A hen does not need a rooster to lay an egg but most layers need an average of 14 hours of light per day to lay eggs.

What is “hormone free” chicken?

- ☞ All living organisms have hormones to regulate body functions, however no additional hormones are allowed in raising market hogs or poultry.

Are brown eggs more nutritious than white eggs?

- ☞ Eggshell color does not affect the nutritional value of an egg.

How long will eggs stay fresh?

- ☞ Refrigerated eggs will stay fresh for 5 weeks but will stay fresh up to 2 months if kept in an airtight container.

How can you tell if an egg is fresh?

- ☞ Fresh eggs sink in water while old eggs float. Always store eggs with pointed end down in the original carton as eggs are porous and can absorb other smells.

What is the nutrient value of one egg?

- ☞ 1 large egg provides 75 calories and all necessary nutrients needed, except Vitamin C.

What is the incubation time for a fertilized chicken egg?

- ☞ The incubation time for a chicken egg is 21 days.

What is candling eggs?

- ☞ Candling is the process of shining a bright light through the egg in order to identify any imperfections in the egg like a cracked shell.