Weaning protocol in five steps

SPRAYFO

1	2	3	4	5
Check available dry feeds	Start reducing milk volume	Monitor calf & starter intake	Finish feeding milk	Check status after weaning

Successful weaning comes with a plan

- ☐ Take your time; 3-4 weeks
- ☐ Feed all other feeds ad libitum → water + calf starter + forage
- ☐ Provide sufficient feeding space
- ☐ Monitor calf starter feed intake
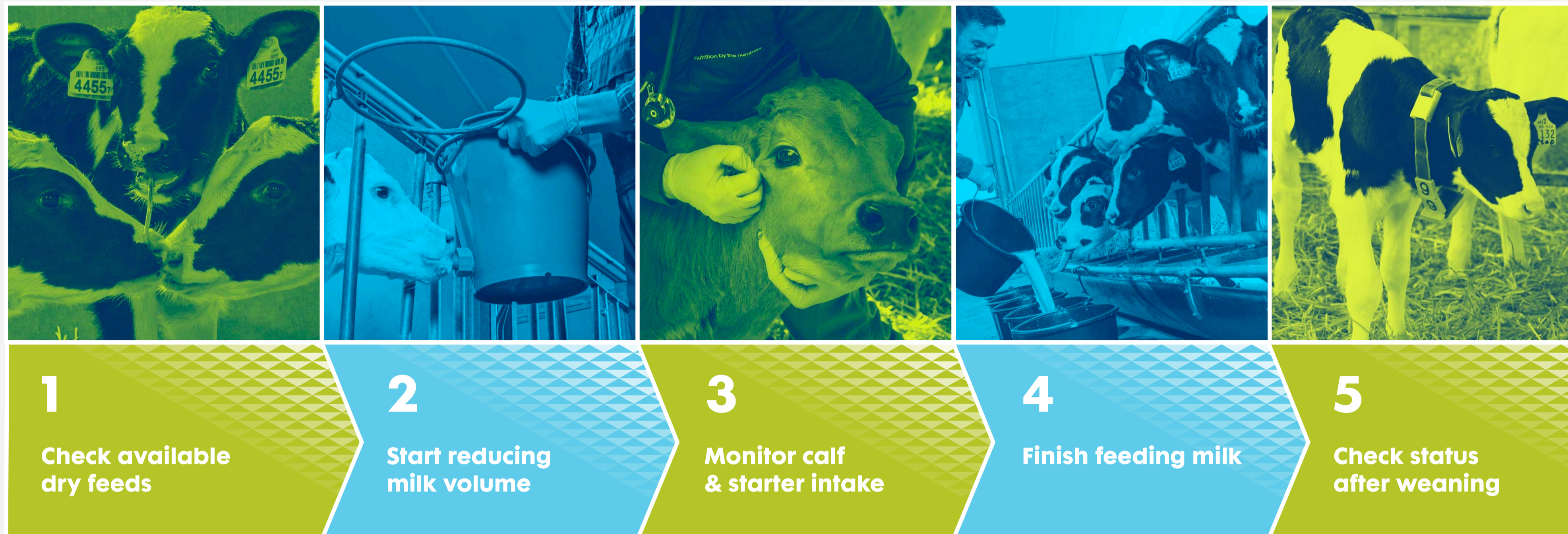- ☐ Don't move the calves around weaning
- ☐ Sell calves not reaching target weight at 6 months

Calf starter

- Refresh the calf starter daily
- Palatability is of great importance
- Type of feed - pellet/muesli/ TMR – is of lesser importance
- Intake in week 5-6 should be above 0,5 kg a day

Roughage/forage

- Make sure the forage is fresh and dry
- Fiber level is important
- Protein and energy are less important
- Intake in week 5-6 is low; 50-100 gram a day

Milk

- First step is to reduce the liters of milk by 20%
- Start doing this in week 6 or 7
- Feed the same milk (CMR) product, same concentration
- Reduce milk further in steps or gradually

Water

- Check supply; ad libitum
- Check quality; should be suitable for humans
- Water quality is a critical success factor

Monitor feed

- Check the feeding space; Wide enough? Clean?
- Register the feed intake per calf or group.
- In week 8-9 feed intake needs to be 1-1,5 kg a day

Monitor calf

- Check the body weight in week 7-8
- Should be close to 2 x the birthweight.
- If not; extend milk feeding for 1-2 more weeks

Do NOT finish too fast

- Abrupt weaning causes high stress
- During the last week, only feed 1 meal per day
- In a group; wean at all at same time to prevent fighting for milk
- Finish feeding of milk in week 10-11
- Do not move the calves immediately after weaning

Opportunity to improve efficiency

- Growth of calves is fastest after weaning
- The growth is very efficient up to 4-5 months
- Therefore, ad lib feeding up to 4 months is advised

Final check

- Check effect of weaning protocol by weighing at 6 months
- For calves not reaching target; consider to sell them

Sprayfo feeding & weaning schedule

1. 3 days colostrum
2. 6 weeks peak milk
3. 3-4 weeks weaning
4. Finish milk in week 10
5. Water in week 1
6. Starter in week 2
7. Forage in week 3

— gDM milk
— gDM calf starter
— gDM forage

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