

Panelist Profile, Group-Housed Calf Systems
Kelly Farms, Rensselaer Falls, NY
Allen, Mary and Jason Kelly
700 Cows, up to 48 Calves on Milk



✧ Kelly Farms' group-raised calf barn built in 2011, designed and constructed for that purpose.

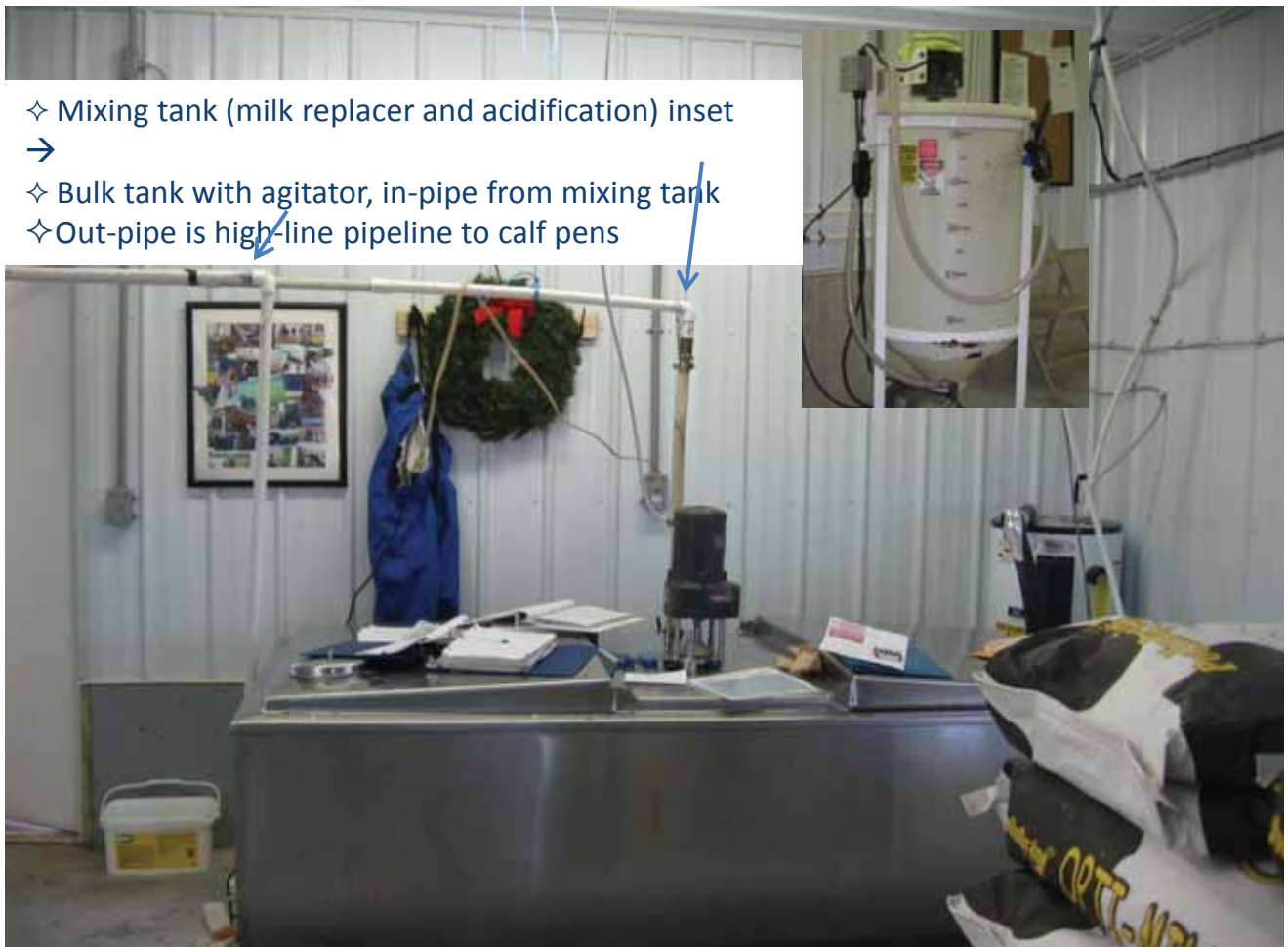


✧ Calves were raised previously in a converted tie-barn in individual pens. Occasional overflow calves were in hutches. By sheer desire, determination and many, many hours of labor (including treatments), Mary and Ric Bartholomew were able to get calves to gain the kind of lean tissue growth at rates that met or exceeded modern industry standards. However, not much life outside of the calf barn.

Migrating to a barn purposed to continue quality rates of gain yet drastically reduce feeding and digestive treatment labor has revolutionized lifestyle. Time spent in barn is more focused on calf well-being without running out of steam. There's even energy left to make the barn inviting to staff and visitors alike as well as dropping the kayak into nearby river for a mind-clearing paddle.



- ✧ 8 pens of up to 8 calves per pen. Age range typically 4 to 7 days
- ✧ Summer ventilation – open side and end walls, positive pressure tubes
- ✧ Winter ventilation – positive pressure tubes and air exhaust opening at top of sidewall curtains



- ✧ Mixing tank (milk replacer and acidification) inset
→
- ✧ Bulk tank with agitator, in-pipe from mixing tank
- ✧ Out-pipe is high-line pipeline to calf pens



✧ Pipeline runs through insulated, tall, narrow boxes at 6 of 7 pens.

✧ Acidified milk replacer flows through down tube to fitting with peach-teat nipples on inside of pen



✧ Digital thermometer reading from inside the box is easily read from the outside.



✧ Self-contained unit with barrel receptacle for acidified milk replacer is in the group (pen) which in process of being weaned. (pipeline self-feeder is shut down). Dilution to nearly straight water can be done in increments. The peach-teat nipple arrangement on the calf side is similar to the self-feeder boxes in the other 6 pens.

✧ Weaned group pens are at the far end of the barn. (water and calf starter in first post-weaned pen and transition barn TMR, water and starter is available ad-lib in the “last stop” pen) Gate system is set up so one person can easily load up the entire group in minutes.



✧ Empty pen is scrupulously sanitized and rested. Cleaned pen must pass Mary's “white glove” test. Who says you can't get young people to work hard any more?!

Summary of Practices – Kelly Farms Group Calf System

➤Feeding System Type: Farm Fabricated “Ad Lib” Feeder
➤Milk Sources: Acidified Milk Replacer, 26% Protein 18% Fat
➤Milk Reservoir Sanitation: 1x/week (7 of 8 pens have a pipeline; sanitized daily)
➤Milk Transport: Pipeline directly to tubes
➤Housing: New Cold Barn
➤Summer Ventilation: Open curtains and end walls plus positive pressure tubes
➤Winter Ventilation: Positive Pressure “Tubes”
➤Group Sizes: 6 - 8
➤Digestive Disorder Incidence: $\leq 1\%$
➤Respiratory Problem Incidence: Currently $< 2\%$, peak at 38%, June 2011 down to 14% (a learning curve)
➤Baby Calf Mortality: $\leq 1\%$
➤Calf Starter % CP: 22%
➤Target Calf Starter Consumption at Weaning: 5 lbs.
➤Target Age at Weaning: 41 - 45 days
➤Average % of Birth Weight at Weaning: 185% (200%+ adjusted to 56 days)