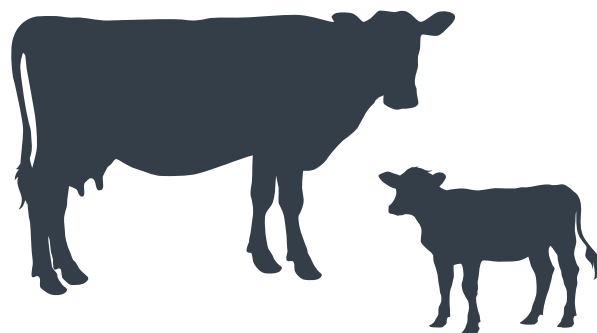


# What to Expect When Your Cow is Expecting

## FARM ANIMAL FIELD SERVICES

- Gestation length is 280 days +/- 10 days
- The last week to month before birth
  - » Udder becomes enlarged and full
  - » Vulva may appear swollen
  - » Clear vaginal discharge may be present



### FIRST STAGE OF LABOR

- Fetus is moving toward birth canal
- Lasts 2 - 6 hours
- Restlessness
- Standing up and laying down more frequently
- Vocalizing
- Increased urination and defecation
- Tail head is raised
- Isolation from the rest of the herd

### SECOND STAGE OF LABOR

- Active Labor
- Lasts 30-60 minutes
- Cow may be standing, laying down, or laying down on her side
- "Water breaks" - may see translucent membranous bag which will then burst and clear to cloudy fluid will be expelled
- Active abdominal press
- Calf presents itself and is birthed
  - » Normal presentation is both front feet extended followed by the head

### THIRD STAGE OF LABOR

- Fetal membranes/placenta expelled
- Can last 12 - 24 hours

## WHEN TO CALL THE VET

- Any prolapse of the vagina or the rectum - excessive tissue hanging out
- Bleeding from the rectum - can indicate excessive straining
- Discharge that is foul smelling, bright red, green, milky or pus-like
  - » Normal discharge can be red tinged but should not be dark red, thick, chunky, or foul smelling
- In stage 1 of labor - restless for greater than 6 hours prior to any contractions noted
- In stage 2 of labor - more than 30 minutes goes by without any progression
  - » For example, contractions start and you don't see any parts of calf in 30 minutes or see part of calf but no progression of labor within 30 minutes
- See a red and thick membrane or "bag" emerge before the calf does
- Incorrect positioning of calf
  - » Head first with no feet
  - » Feet upside-down
  - » Tail or back end first
  - » Only seeing one foot or seeing three or four feet at once
  - » Seeing front legs and no head
- Parts of the calf that have emerged are swollen to touch
- Cow is down after giving birth and cannot rise
- Uterine prolapse following birth