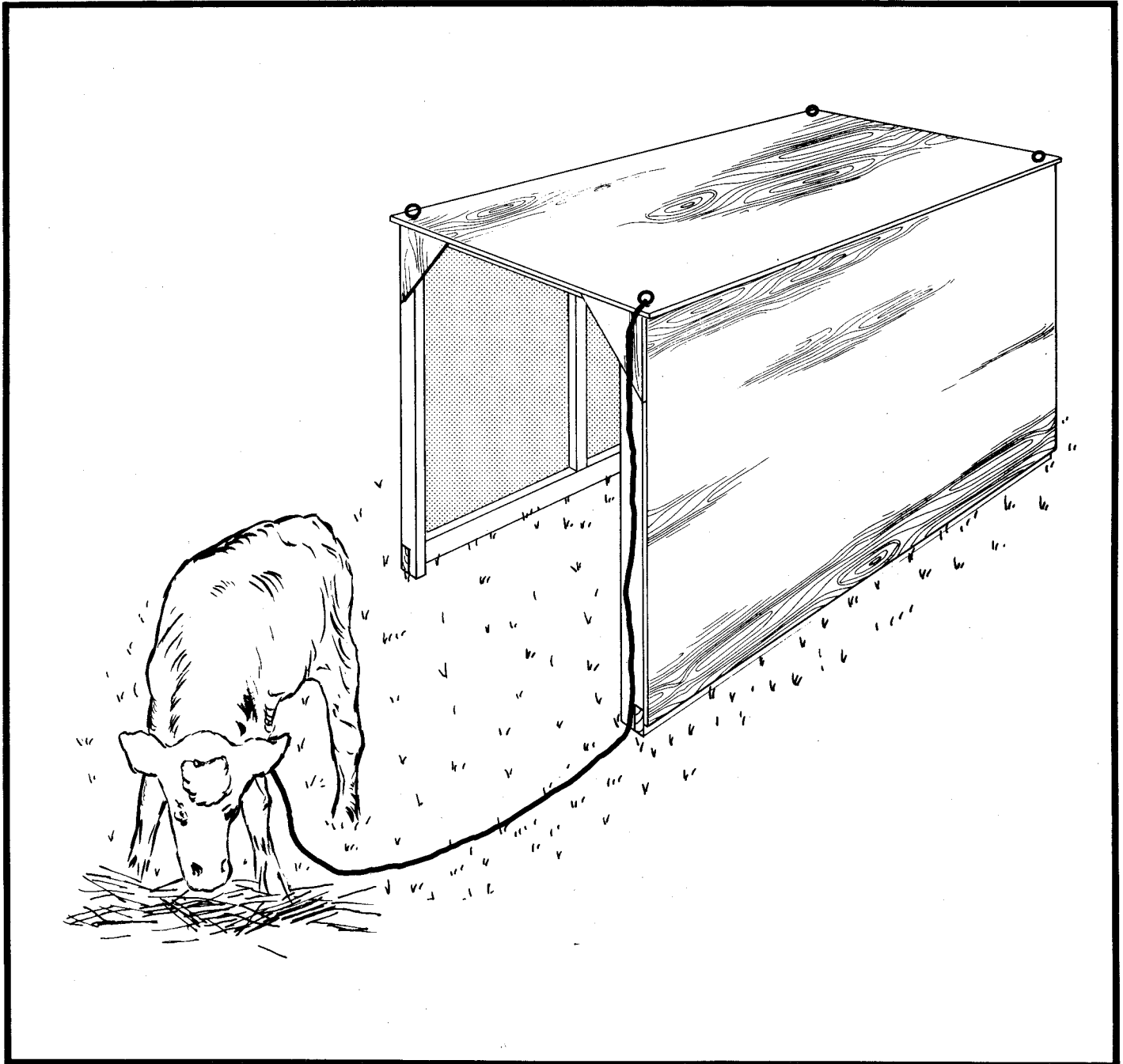




CALF HUTCH



The Canada Plan Service prepares detailed plans showing how to construct modern farm buildings, livestock housing systems, storages and equipment for Canadian Agriculture.

This leaflet gives the details for a farm building component or piece of farmstead equipment. To obtain another copy of this leaflet, contact your local provincial agricultural engineer or extension advisor.

CALF HUTCH

PLAN 2832 REVISED 82:08

Calf hutches are the basis for simple, effective housing of young calves. The calf hutch is an economical alternative to building a specialized calf nursery, and it can be much better than exposing young calves to humidity and infections in the main dairy barn. In milder parts of Canada, hutches may be the only calf facility, or they may be used periodically to empty and clean the regular pen area indoors.

More labor is required for calves in hutches, and the work must be done in both good and bad weather. Nevertheless, many dairymen are surprised to find that even in winter, calves raised in outdoor hutches can be healthier than those raised in warm housing. Management of calves in hutches is different from conventional housing, and to be successful, these differences must be understood.

LOCATION Locate hutches in a wind-sheltered area on well-drained soil. Face the open ends south for maximum warmth from the low winter sun. Set the hutches in rows running east-west, with enough space between so that each hutch can be moved sideways to new ground whenever calves are changed.

CONSTRUCTION The calf hutch is framed simply with 2" lumber and covered with full-sized panels of 3/8" sheathing grade exterior plywood. Exterior grade Aspenite sheathing 1/2" thick may be substituted. The front must be left fully open to take advantage of the drying and warming effects of sunlight. A floor is not necessary, and would in fact make cleaning difficult.

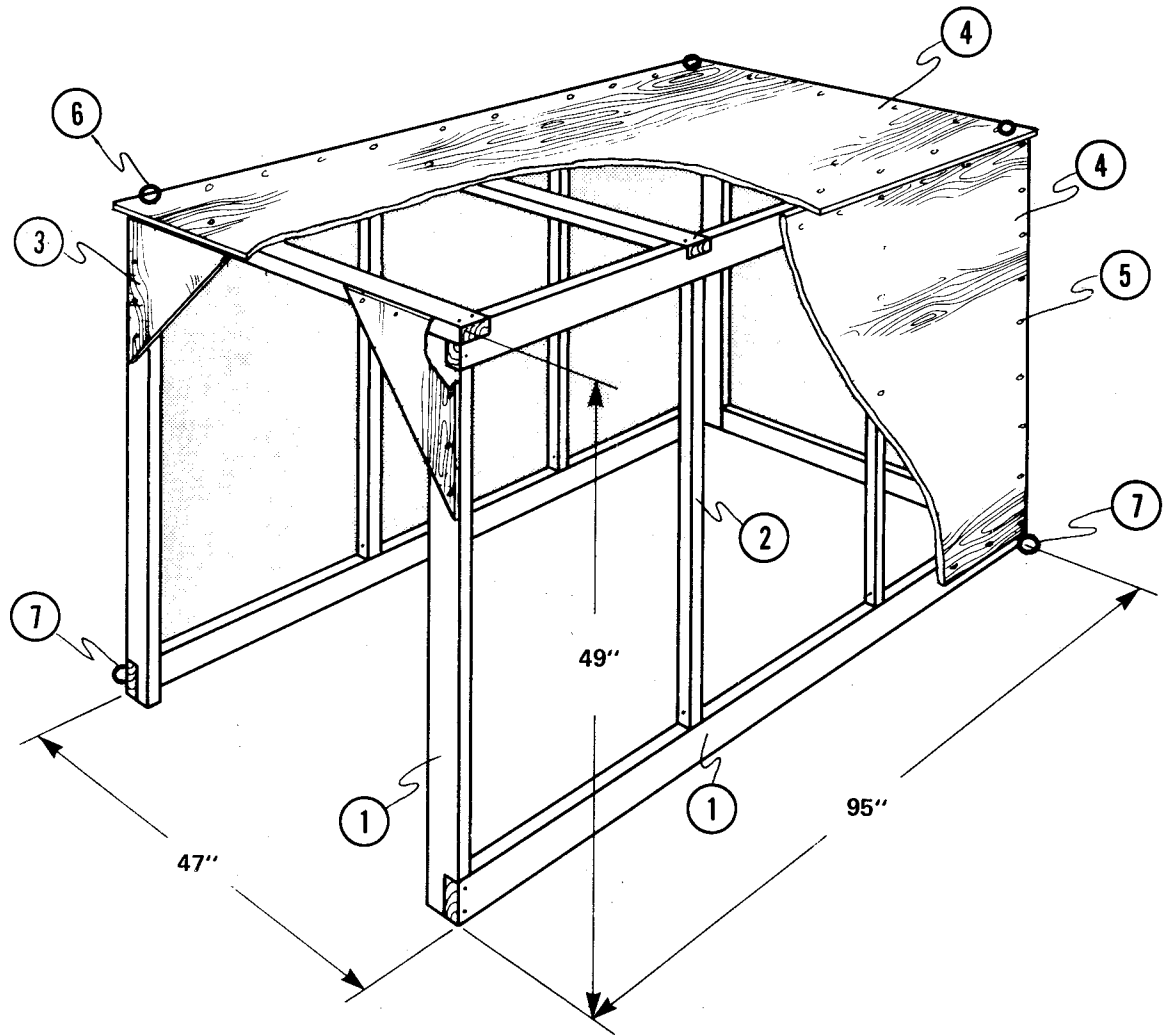
Confine the calf with a rope tether to the front of the hutch (eye bolt 6), or use a stake in the ground. Leave enough slack in the rope so that calf can easily reach the back of the hutch, and use a swivel-snap to connect the rope to the leather collar strap to avoid twisting and kinking the rope. Alternately, use a hardwood slat fence enclosure with corners connected by hinges and pins for easy dismantling. For very cold weather, hang a curtain of jute sacking or similar open-weave material about halfway back in the hutch. This provides some additional protection, yet it breathes readily to control dampness.

BEDDING Start each calf in a separate clean hutch relocated on new ground. For insulation, bed generously with a full bale of straw; other bedding materials such as sawdust or shavings can blow around and might be harmful if eaten by the calf.

CHANGING THE CALVES Calves can be placed in hutches 6 to 12 hours after birth, even in below-freezing weather. Before this, calves should have received several feedings of colostrum, and they should be dry and active. Raise the calves to time of weaning from liquid diet (at 6 to 8 weeks of age), then move to well-ventilated group pens holding up to 6 calves.

FEEDING AND WATERING In summer, feed a standard liquid diet (fresh milk, or milk replacer, or sour colostrum - half colostrum with half warm water twice per day). From day one, offer a good palatable calf starter, (18 to 20% protein), and fresh water.

In winter, the calf will need about 25% more food energy to maintain body heat. Feed liquid diets at body temperature (38 to 40°C). Because of freezing, it is best to offer warm water at noon each day. As in summer, offer calf starter free choice.



- 1 2" x 4", bottom members to be soaked in wood preservative
- 2 2" x 2" studs
- 3 3/8" plywood gussets
- 4 3/8" x 4' x 8' plywood
- 5 galvanized nails throughout
- 6 eyebolts at 4 corners for lifting with a rope bridle and tractor loader
- 7 ringbolts at 4 corners, use metal or wood stakes to prevent overturning in wind, trim and drive stakes to prevent tangling of calf tether