



Spring Babies: Calves

Learn how farmers care for spring calves while using your hands and feet to make art!



Many farm animals have babies in the spring. Cows usually give birth to one **calf** each year. In the United States, most **calves** are born between February and May. Calves stay healthiest during warm weather. Having fresh spring grass to eat helps mothers to produce milk with lots of nutrients for their young. Did you know that newborn calves can walk just a few hours after they are born?

Beef cows are raised for their meat. Some calves are born in barns and others are born in the grassy pasture where the cows graze. The calves stay with their mothers in the pasture for about six months, drinking milk and learning to eat grass. When the calves are around six months old, they are moved to a separate pasture.

To read about 10-year-old Cecelia and her family's beef farm click [here](https://tinyurl.com/pci0gtpy).
<https://tinyurl.com/pci0gtpy>

To read more about beef farming click [here](https://tinyurl.com/beeffacts).
<https://tinyurl.com/beeffacts>



Beef cow and calf
Photo credit: beeftolive.com

Dairy cows are raised for their milk. Dairy calves are born in a special pen inside of a barn. For the health and safety of the mothers and calves, newborn calves only stay with their mothers for a few hours after birth. The calves live safely in individual hutches for their first two months. This allows dairy farmers to keep a close eye on the health of each calf and avoid any accidents where a cow might roll over on or step on her calf. Farmers make sure the calves drink milk, stay warm, and have clean, dry straw to sleep on. After about two months, the calves can safely live together in small groups. During this time, they drink less milk and more water. They learn to feed on hay and grain. The females will be able to join the milking herd when they are around two years old.

To read about 8-year-old Lucas and his family's dairy farm click [here](https://tinyurl.com/18yq19kd).
<https://tinyurl.com/18yq19kd>

To watch a video about caring for dairy calves click [here](https://tinyurl.com/43n3bgvx).
<https://tinyurl.com/43n3bgvx>

To read more about dairy farming click [here](https://tinyurl.com/dairyfactsaitc).
<https://tinyurl.com/dairyfactsaitc>



Dairy calf hutches



Calf Handprint Art

You will need:

- colored paper (so the white paint will show)
- paint (black, white, pink, brown)
- paint brushes
- black marker
- googly eyes (optional)

Directions:

1. Decide what color you want your calf to be. This example shows a white calf with black spots. Other choices could be white with brown spots, brown with black spots, all black, or all brown.
2. With a paintbrush, paint your hand in the color you choose.
3. Add spots of a different color if desired.
4. Paint your fingertips (not your thumb) black for the hooves.
5. Press your painted hand onto a sheet of paper. Be sure to use colored paper if you used white paint.
6. With a paint brush or your thumb, make the calf's head a little bit bigger and add a pink nose.
7. Wash your hands well and let the paint dry.
8. When the paint is dry, add details such as eyes, nose, ears, and tail with a black marker.



Calf Footprint Art

You will need:

- white paper
- paint (black or brown, pink)
- paint brushes
- black marker
- an adult or partner to assist if needed



Photo credit: alattewithotta.com

Directions:

1. Have a plan for cleaning the paint off your foot before you start!
2. With a paintbrush, paint the heel of your foot pink.
3. Paint the rest of your foot black or brown, including your toes.
4. Press your foot onto the white paper.
5. Let the paint dry.
6. Add details such as eyes, nose, and ears with a black marker.



Photo credit: abcsofliteracy.com

If painting your hands and feet is not for you, try tracing your hand on paper and cutting it out to make a calf. Be sure to add details!