

Veal is a nutritious and nutrient-rich meat that is produced from the male calves of dairy cows. A dairy cow will have a baby once a year. When it is born, a calf will weigh 85-100 pounds. Because the calf is born with no antibodies, it isn't able to fight diseases. In the first days of the calf's life, the farmer will make sure it gets milk from its mother. This milk has extra nutrients to help the calf start to build its immune system. To help protect the calf, the farmer will remove the calf from its mother soon after it is born and put the calf in an individual pen or hutch. By keeping the calf in its own pen, the farmer can make sure it doesn't get sick from the cows or other calves and keep it healthy.

Female calves will usually stay on the dairy farm where they will grow up and join the milking herd. The male calves, called bulls, are not needed on the dairy farm. Within a week of being born, bulls are usually sold to other farmers to be raised for their meat. Some might be sold to beef farmers to be raised for 16-18 months for beef. Most are sold to veal farmers to be raised for veal.

On a veal farm, farmers work hard to make sure the calves have everything they need to be healthy and grow. Veal is typically raised on family farms in states, like Pennsylvania, where there are a lot of dairy farms. The farmers raise the calves in barns, where they can protect them from harsh weather and closely monitor their feed and water. Veal barns have lots of natural light, good ventilation and heating and cooling systems to keep them comfortable and healthy. Until they are 8-10 weeks old, they will stay in individual pens inside the barn. During this time, they are building up their immune system. The farmer works closely with a veterinarian to help animals who are sick get better and prevent diseases from spreading in the barn. Once it is safe for them to be in larger groups, they will be put into pens with other calves based on their size and age. In the pens they have plenty of room to move and access to fresh drinking water whenever they need it. The veterinarian will help monitor the health of the herd to ensure they stay healthy and disease-free in their group pens.

Most veal is milk-fed for their entire life. These calves receive milk replacer that is rich in protein and nutrients. The milk replacer is made with the byproducts of cheese production and has all the nutrients the calves need to grow and develop. Growing veal calves need the proper amount of protein, iron and fat in their diet. Animal nutritionists work with the farmers as the calves are growing to make sure they continue to get the proper nutrition they need. Veal farmers provide excellent care for their animals and work to use the best handling practices for the health and safety of their animals.

By 20 weeks of age, the calves typically weigh around 500 pounds. At this weight, they are ready to have their meat harvested. Cutlets are the most common cut of veal, but you can also get roasts, chops, and ground veal. Veal is a light-colored meat with very little fat. The meat is inspected for quality and safety, then sold to grocery stores and restaurants. Veal is a nutritious choice. A 3-ounce serving can provide more than 10% of the daily value of many nutrients, like protein, zinc, niacin and B-vitamins.