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In Partnership with Dairy Farmers

This research program will comprise of four parts:

1) An intensive controlled trial to evaluate differences in growth and general health of calves managed under one of three milk-feeding programs.

2) A comparison of anatomical development for calves from each of the feeding systems.

3) A field evaluation of *ad libitum* acidified milk-feeding and traditional feeding systems on Ontario dairy operations.

4) Finally, the information obtained from this research program will be used to complete an economic analysis, and a partial budget, within the dairy industry.

There is growing evidence that milk *ad libitum* is advantageous in promoting growth, development and health in dairy replacement and veal calves. One concern with feeding high levels of milk is the potential for spoilage. Preserving milk with formic acid is one way to prevent this spoilage and enable the practical and economical application of *ad libitum* feeding systems in dairy calf management.

A number of Ontario dairy producers have recently implemented this novel *ad libitum* acidified milk-feeding program for their calves. Unfortunately, there is limited documented evidence from controlled research to support this practice. The aim of this research project will be to evaluate the effect of feeding *ad libitum* acidified milk to dairy calves on performance, production and economic parameters.

Support received from:

Community Benefits Include: Improved dairy and veal calf management, improved dairy animal health and performance.