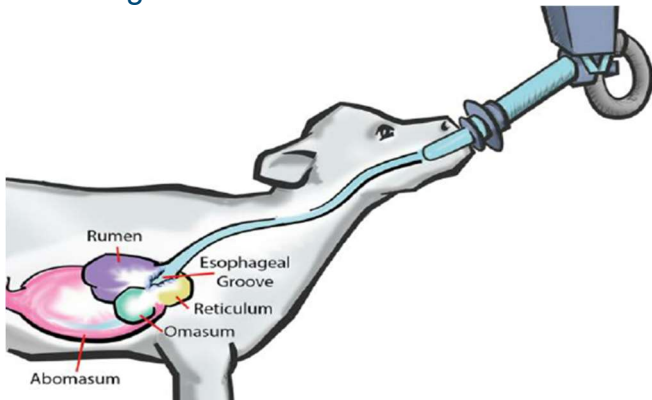




## WHY USE TEATS INSTEAD OF A BUCKET ?

In nature, calves suckle from a “teat”, a behavior that provides numerous advantages compared to drinking from a bucket.



### Slower Milk Ingestion and Improved Digestion

Calves are naturally designed to ingest milk slowly. Feeding calves with teats reduces the speed of milk flow, preventing overfeeding and allowing for better nutrient absorption.

Additionally, drinking through a teat requires calves to put in more effort, which stimulates the production of saliva and the enzyme lipase. Saliva contains components that enhance the digestion of nutrients in milk and

support proper clot formation in the abomasum, particularly when feeding whole milk or SMP-based CMRs.

In contrast, bucket feeding allows the same volume of milk to be consumed in a shorter period, producing less saliva. This can lead to milk entering the rumen instead of the abomasum, causing digestive problems such as milk overflow. This risk makes teats particularly important for accelerated feeding schedules, such as when calves consume up to 8 liters of milk per day.

### Supporting the Esophageal Groove Reflex

Milk must bypass the rumen and go directly into the abomasum, the only stomach compartment with the necessary enzymes for milk digestion. Calves achieve this via the esophageal groove reflex, a muscular structure at the lower end of the esophagus. When the reflex is activated, the groove closes, forming a tube that directs milk into the abomasum.

Using teats supports this reflex by maintaining a natural neck position and stimulating the groove's contraction through the angle of the head. Bucket feeding, on the other hand, increases the chance that the groove remains open, leading to milk entering other stomach compartments and causing digestive issues.

### Maximizing Nutrient Utilization

Proper milk digestion is crucial, especially when calves consume 8 liters of milk per day. Effective digestion ensures that milk supports calf growth, immunity, and overall health. Every percentage of nutrients that calves fail to utilize represents wasted money and lost genetic potential.

### **Reducing Unwanted Sucking Behavior**

Another important benefit of using teats is satisfying the innate sucking drive of calves. When this drive is unmet, as often happens with bucket feeding, calves are more likely to engage in undesirable behaviors such as sucking on pen mates or their surroundings. This can lead to stress and even injury among calves.

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### **CONCLUSION**

Feeding calves through teats offers numerous advantages over bucket feeding. It minimizes digestive issues like diarrhea, promotes better nutrient uptake, and satisfies natural behaviors, resulting in healthier, better-performing calves. By choosing teats, farmers can ensure their calves achieve optimal growth and development while maximizing the efficiency of their feeding programs.