

## Newborn Calf in February Sunshine



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This nice calf was a surprise.

The winter beef herd is only 20 head. They are a mix of 2015 calves, yearlings and a few young cows. Once a week, I fill the hay feeders. The herd drinks from the Snake River. Winter chores are easy. Most days all I need to do is check the beef, bison and horse herds.

This calf was dropped in the snow a few minutes before I checked the animals on Monday morning.

This calf was not expected by either the cow or me.

The mother was obvious but disinterested at the time. Her hormones had not yet kicked in. She did not have milk and she was not behaving maternally.

I dried and rubbed the calf. I left it in the pasture on dry hay.

There are several options in a situation like that, but none of the choices is particularly good.

If I interfere too much, the cow will not accept the calf.

I decided on "watchful waiting."

Before dark, the cow's milk came; she warmed up to the calf.

It is now Thursday, both are doing quite well.

I bought several range cows in November. They were culls headed for slaughter. The cows had raised calves in 2015. They were in good health but milked down. Either they produced more milk than their bodies could easily produce or they were on poor grazing.

I bought them with the intention of getting them in good condition for harvest next June.

Animals like these make excellent ground beef when grass fat.

The vet checked them over when I bought them. He did not report any of the cows as pregnant.

This calf will extend its mother's life until at least next Fall.



### **February Calf and Mom**

This young cow is thinner than she should be for producing a calf but we will take good care of her. Both will do well.

My guess is that she is a Murray Grey. This breed has become quite popular in the last 40 years. Most beef cattle breeds were developed in Britain or France and have been known for hundreds of years.

The Murray Grey breed was developed in Australia less than 100 years ago.

A roan colored Shorthorn cow happened to produce calves of this unique grey color when mated with a Black Angus bull. The lady of the ranch liked the heifer calves that the cow produced. She insisted that her husband keep them for breeding. The story is that the cow produced twelve such heifers, an incredible number.

In any case, the grey animals had good beef characteristics, the grey color bred true and a new breed of cattle was born.

The first Murray Grey were imported to the US in the 1970s.

The calves' father was a Red Angus.

Red Angus do exceptionally well on grass.

Tom