

Heifer Raising Costs in 2024

The cost of raising heifers is usually above their market value. A slide rule* for heifer raising costs at various weights with labor included would be \$2.73 per head per day at 700 pounds with approximately \$0.15 slide down for each 100 pounds under 700 pounds and a \$0.15 - \$0.30 slide up for each 100 pounds over 700 pounds. Breeding age heifers, of course, run a bit higher due to extra labor and breeding fees at this age.

ISU Extension Dairy Team Heifer Costs Per Day 2024							
Heifer	WI Data 2013 Base Yr			Estimated for 2024			
Weight	2013	2013	2013	2024	2024	2024	2024
Lbs.	Cost	Feed	Other	Slide	Cost	Feed	Other
200	\$2.15	\$1.20	\$0.95	\$0.15	\$2.09	\$0.90	\$1.19
300	\$2.30	\$1.32	\$0.98	\$0.15	\$2.22	\$0.99	\$1.23
400	\$2.45	\$1.44	\$1.01	\$0.15	\$2.34	\$1.08	\$1.26
500	\$2.60	\$1.56	\$1.04	\$0.15	\$2.47	\$1.17	\$1.30
600	\$2.75	\$1.68	\$1.07	\$0.15	\$2.60	\$1.26	\$1.34
700	\$2.90	\$1.80	\$1.10	\$0.15	\$2.73	\$1.35	\$1.38
800	\$3.15	\$1.92	\$1.23	\$0.25	\$2.98	\$1.44	\$1.54
900	\$3.45	\$2.04	\$1.41	\$0.30	\$3.29	\$1.53	\$1.76
1000	\$3.65	\$2.16	\$1.49	\$0.20	\$3.48	\$1.62	\$1.86
1100	\$3.80	\$2.28	\$1.52	\$0.15	\$3.61	\$1.71	\$1.90
1200	\$3.95	\$2.40	\$1.55	\$0.15	\$3.74	\$1.80	\$1.94
Feed	75% of 2013 costs			Other Costs		25% Higher	
by Larry Tranel, Dairy Field Specialist, NE/SE Iowa						Total	\$2,387

Realize costs vary greatly from farm to farm. Thus, know this thumb-rule "slide guide" is just that--a thumb-rule guide. Calculate your own costs for more accuracy. Feed cost should change about 15-20 cents/head/day (depending on wastage) for each 100 pounds calculated with feed prices below, but the 2013 WI data did not show that much change per 100 pounds body weight change.

Heifer Costs 2024*	Size	700	15.75 lbs DM daily
Corn Price	\$4.50 bu	5 lbs	\$0.40 /hd/day
Hay Price	\$160 ton	10 lbs	\$0.64 /hd/day
Supplement	\$0.21 lb	1.5 lbs	\$0.32 /hd/day
2.25% BW		16.5 lbs	\$1.36 /hd/day
Feed Costs = \$0.082 lb feed			

Estimated cost of raising heifers from 2024 is shown in the table on the right for a conventional 26,000 lb. herd. For 24 months of feed, 6.5 tons of dry matter is needed per heifer for a total feed cost of \$1,429 using market values. Cost of raising heifers is \$1,943 before interest on ownership, initial calf cost or labor is considered. Total cost is \$2.65 per day for a good genetic heifer or \$3.15 per day with labor included.

Reducing the heifer raising period from 24 months to 23 months saves approximately \$93 per heifer. For a 100 cow herd raising 40 replacements each year, this savings would equal \$3,720 per year. But, if heifers are not able to reach 85% of their Mature Body Weight, this could cost much more than that in the bulk tank later on. Reducing the cull rate by 10% would reduce heifers needed by four thus reducing heifer raising costs by another \$9,704 (\$2,651 - \$225 calf value = \$2,426 x 4). Studies show rotational grazing of dairy heifers reduces the cost of raising heifers in a range of \$150-\$300 per heifer so worth a look.

*Itemized Costs -- 2024		Heifer Raising Budget	
		1 Heifer	for 24 months
Feed Costs (DM = Dry Matter)		Feed Costs	
Hay/Haylage - DM	\$621.18	3.00	ton
Pasture Forage - DM	\$0.00	0.00	ton
Corn Silage - DM	\$288.80	1.90	ton
Corn Equivalent - US No. 2	\$130.42	26.00	bu.
By Product Feed			
Protein Supplement	\$188.10	600.00	lb.
Salt and Minerals	\$2.75	50.00	lb.
Fat Supplement	\$0.00	0.00	lb.
Milk Replacer/Calf Feed	\$198.00	200.00	lb.
	\$1,429	6.49	ton/hd
Livestock Costs		Livestock Costs	
Dairy Supplies	\$13.00		head
Freight/Trucking/Hauling	\$6.00		head
Veterinary & Medicine	\$77.00		head
Breeding Fees	\$42.00		head
DHIA/Accounting/Legal	\$3.00		head
Marketing	\$1.00		head
Bedding Costs	\$50.00	0.5	ton
Gas/Fuel/Oil	\$13.60	4	gal.
Electricity	\$21.00	175	kWh
Other (oper. int., phone)	\$12.00		head
Facilities & Equipment Costs		Facilities & Equip Costs	
Milking Center/Parlor			Cost/Head/Day
Dairy Housing			
Manure Storage	\$21.60	\$0.03	head
Heifer Housing	\$192.60	\$0.27	head
Machinery and Equipment	\$55.22	\$0.08	head
	\$2.65	Cost/head/day	
	\$3.15	with labor included	
Cow Ownership Costs		\$120.00	Ownership Cost/hd
Heifer Replacement Costs		\$225.00	Initial Value
Labor and Mgt Costs		\$363.00	22.00 hrs/hd
		\$2,651 Total Cost (24 mon)	

ISU Extension and Outreach has 17 budgets for various dairy production systems, each with their own heifer raising budget, similar to the one above. This budget is a sample but the following table depicts heifer raising costs relative to farm type.

System Type	\$/hd/day	w/Labor	Total Cost
Conv 26,000 lb Herd	\$2.65	\$3.15	\$2,651
Pasture 18,000 lb Herd	\$2.21	\$2.71	\$2,258
Jersey 15,000 lb Herd	\$2.34	\$2.84	\$2,296 (24 mo)
Jersey 15,000 lb Herd			\$2,105 (22 mo)
Organic 22,000 lb Herd	\$2.70	\$3.22	\$2,584
Organic 15,000 lb Herd	\$2.65	\$3.18	\$2,542
Organic Grass Milk Herd	\$1.92	\$2.45	\$2,000

ISU Extension Dairy Budget www.extension.iastate.edu/dairyteam

*The slide rule is based on 2013 Heifer Raising Costs, University of Wisconsin-Extension, with feed prices adjusted to 2024 levels with other costs increased by 25%. Thus, recognize the estimation of costs.

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