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. Reducing the cull rate by 10% would reduce heifers needed by four thus 85% of their Mature Body Weight, this could cost much more than that in the bulk tank later on. Rotational grazing of dairy heifers reduces the cost of raising heifers in a range of $150-$300 per heifer so worth a look.

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.

Reprinted with permission from ISU Extension Dairy Team. Heifer Costs Per Day 2024

Heifer Raising Costs in 2024

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