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**Investigations into cross-sucking
and possibilities of reducing this during calf rearing**

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6 Summary

Cross-sucking is usually presented as a problem of motherless calf rearing. It follows the pattern of appetence behavior, so that the trigger for satisfying the need to suck is actively sought once a motivation threshold is reached. The feeling of hunger thereby plays a subordinate role, as a result of which the need is only reduced through active sucking and not through consuming a certain volume of milk. In order to identify the trigger for the behavior, the activities prior to the sucking are observed. This involves recording and analyzing the behavior of calves subject to intensive motherless rearing, through several stages, with maximum feed allowances of 8, 10 and 12 l calf milk replacer feed (CMR-feed) per day, for 24 hours and throughout the group phase. The sucking ensues after all activities and is only directly connected to feed intake about 50% of the time. It therefore seems meaningful to divide activities before and after sucking into "sucking activities" that are connected, directly and exclusively, to the satisfaction of the sucking motivation, and into "non-sucking activities", i.e. activities that are unrelated to the sucking motivation. The mutual sucking originates in the natural sucking behavior, which also includes the acceptance of strange mothers as foster mothers if the animal's own mother cannot give sufficient milk. Under the conditions of motherless rearing, in which the calf is not actively weaned by the mother through being repulsed, the need to suck manifests and is retained. The presence of tolerating animals in a group thereby has an encouraging effect. One effective measure for reducing sucking is to offer greater quantities of feed without any restrictions in daily frequency, so that the calves can satisfy the need to suck through the feed intake. In the case of an allowance of 12 l of feed per animal and day up to the 49th day of life, sucking occurred only sporadically and briefly. Calves and young cattle who suck despite a high feed supply should be excluded from breeding due to a potential genetic disposition for a high sucking motivation.