



**This news release from K-State Research and Extension is available online <https://ksre-learn.com/managing-twins>

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Cattle Chat: Managing twins

K-State beef cattle experts share tips for raising twin calves

By Lisa Moser, K-State Research and Extension news service

MANHATTAN, Kan. — Anyone who's ever lived in a house with newborn twins knows they can be a lot of work to take care of. When twin births happen in the beef herd, it often brings about special management considerations, say the experts at Kansas State University's Beef Cattle Institute.

Speaking on a recent [Cattle Chat](#) podcast, K-State assistant professor of animal welfare Eduarda Bortoluzzi and K-State veterinarian Bob Larson discussed steps producers should take in managing twins.

"Twins in beef herds are more common than people might think," Bortoluzzi said. "But they need to be watched closely in the first 24 hours to make sure both calves get colostrum from the dam."

Larson added the biggest concern with twin births is that both calves will not get adequate nutrition early on in life.

"I recommend separating the cow and her twins away from the rest of the herd so they can be closely monitored," Larson said.

If the cow isn't accepting both calves or she cannot produce enough milk to adequately nourish the twins, then it might be time to consider grafting the calf to another cow that has recently lost her calf or hand-raising one of the twins by bottle-feeding them, Larson said.

"Oftentimes twins are not born the same size and so one of them tends to be more rigorous than the other," Larson said.

He also said producers need to make sure both calves are thriving.

“A calf that is thriving will get up and run around to play, while one that isn’t is slow to get up and just lacks energy,” Larson said.

To make it easier to monitor the twins, Bortoluzzi recommends putting the cows with twins in the same pasture as the first-calf heifers.

“By grouping the cows with twins in the heifer pasture, producers can easily make sure the twins are eating well and maintaining good health,” Bortoluzzi said.

To hear the full discussion, listen to [Cattle Chat](#) on your preferred streaming platform.

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FOR PRINT PUBLICATIONS: Links used in this story

Beef Cattle Institute Cattle Chat podcast, <https://ksre-learn.com/cattle-chat-managing-twins>

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