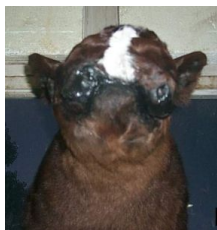


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By: Stefan Anitei, Science Editor



A Two-Faced Calf!

It is the result of artificial insemination

We are already familiar with two headed snakes, two headed lizards, two headed turtles...But ... two headed cows?The newest head (or heads) from Kirk Heldreth's dairy farm is drawing crowds. A two-faced calf was born Dec. 27 at Heldreth Dairy Farm, in southwest Virginia and residents flock to his farm. The beast is normal from its tail until its unusually large head. "The calf breathes out of two noses and has two tongues, which move independently," said Heldreth. There is a sole eye socket containing two eyes where the heads split. "It's the craziest thing I've ever seen," the dairyman said. During the calf's birth, the farmer first believed there were two calves. The calf possesses two lower jaws, but just one mouth. The owner feeds her through a tube, and acknowledges he probably can't maintain that feeding schedule for long. The monster calf is the product of artificial insemination, which was intended to create a genetically superior specimen. "Genetically, this is one of my better calves," he said. "In my 25 years, I've seen it maybe two or three times, but it's pretty rare," said Bob James, a professor in the dairy science department at Virginia Tech and Heldreth's former teacher. The abnormality could be caused by a developmental problem and is called diprosopus. It emerges when twins start to form and don't completely separate. The twins are completely fused with one set of limbs, but part or all the face is duplicated. The calf doesn't appear to have any other physical problem. "It's as healthy as can be," he said.