

MUSK OX BABY ARRIVES



BLESSED EVENT at musk ox farm finds a bouncing baby boy soaking up the sunshine while Mother looks menacingly at the Tundra Times photographer. The 27-pound youngster seems perfectly normal but appeared to be having a slight difficulty going through all his mother's wool to find the milk supply.

Bouncing Baby Boy Musk Ox Born At UA Farm; Mother Doing Fine

It's a boy for "Four Girls," the first musk ox to be born in captivity at the University musk ox farm. The event came a few days sooner than expected but there were no complications.

"Both mother and son are doing fine," said Terry Hall yesterday afternoon in a special interview with the Tundra Times, first on the scene.

The bull calf weighed in at 27 pounds. Mother, known simply as "Four Girl", weighed 377 pounds immediately after the birth. She had weighed 435 pounds just the day before. Herd Manager Terry Hall explained the extra weight differential as mainly a dehydrated condition and "Four Girl" promptly sought to remedy this by

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Musk Ox Baby . . .

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gulping down five gallons of water in two huge gulps.

The proud father is Duke,

the most docile of the 8 bulls on the musk ox farm and often referred to by the staff as a reluctant "Ferdinand."

However, Duke was apparently not so reluctant last fall when he was introduced to 6 cows beginning on September 11.

"This might very well revise slightly our theory of the musk ox gestation period which has generally been considered to be 246 days," said Hall as he counted off the days, arriving at something in the neighborhood of 242.

Also on hand for the event was Larry Rubin, assistant herd manager, but project director John Teal was out of town and missed the blessed event. However, Teal will be back in time for some of the other births from the nine other cows who are expecting.

Estimated time of arrival was a few minutes before midnight, May 10, Hall said. Larry Rubin had checked the oxen about 10 p.m. and Hall checked back about 12—and there it was, a baby musk ox.

The musk ox project is operated by the Institute of Northern Agricultural Research in collaboration with the University of Alaska. Funds are provided by the Kellogg Foundation.

The birth brings the farm's musk ox population to 33. The new infant will not be named until the return of John Teal, project director and research professor of human ecology and animal husbandry.