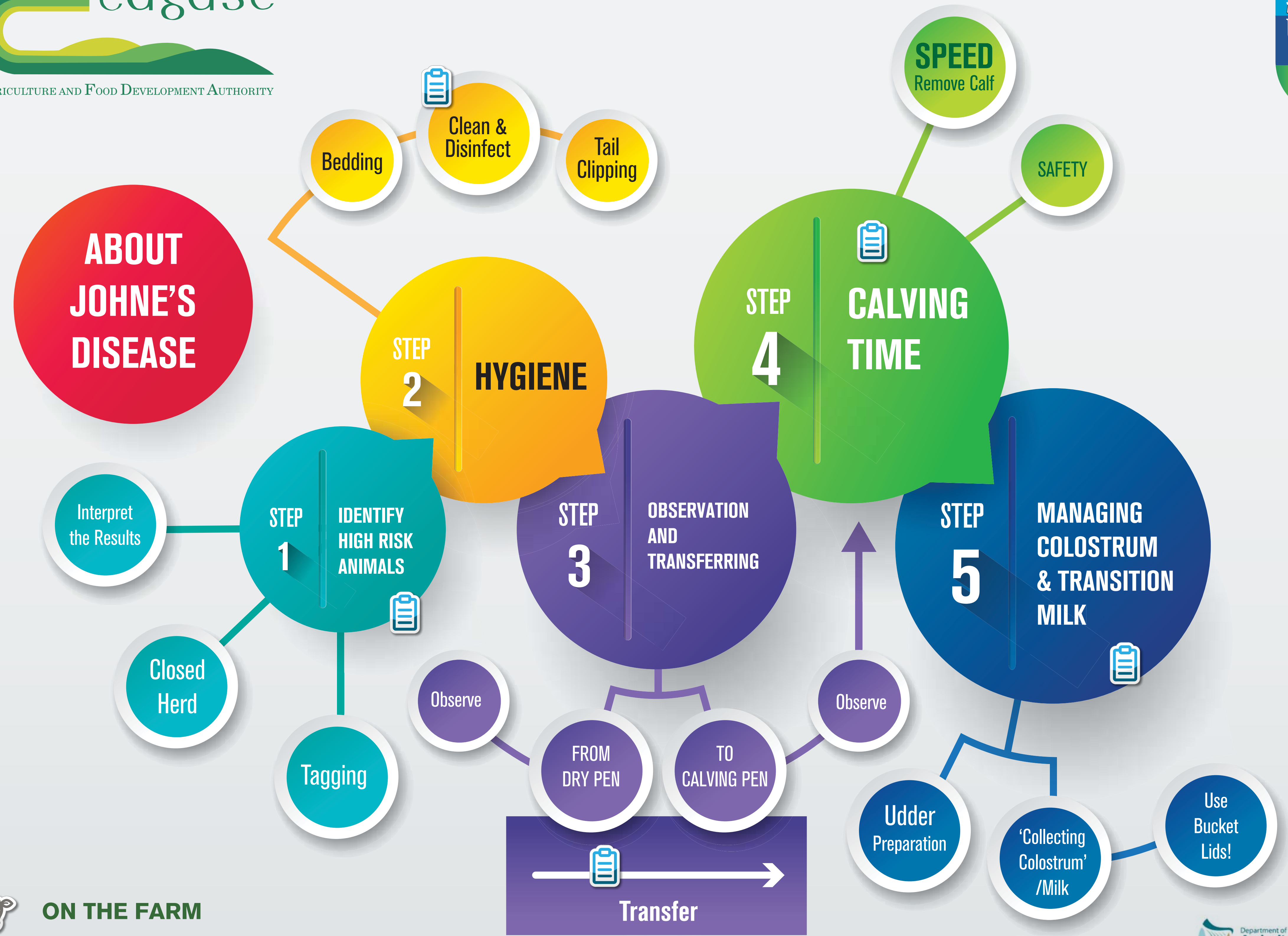


Johne's Disease

A Control Strategy



ON THE FARM



MORE INFORMATION



KEEP A RECORD

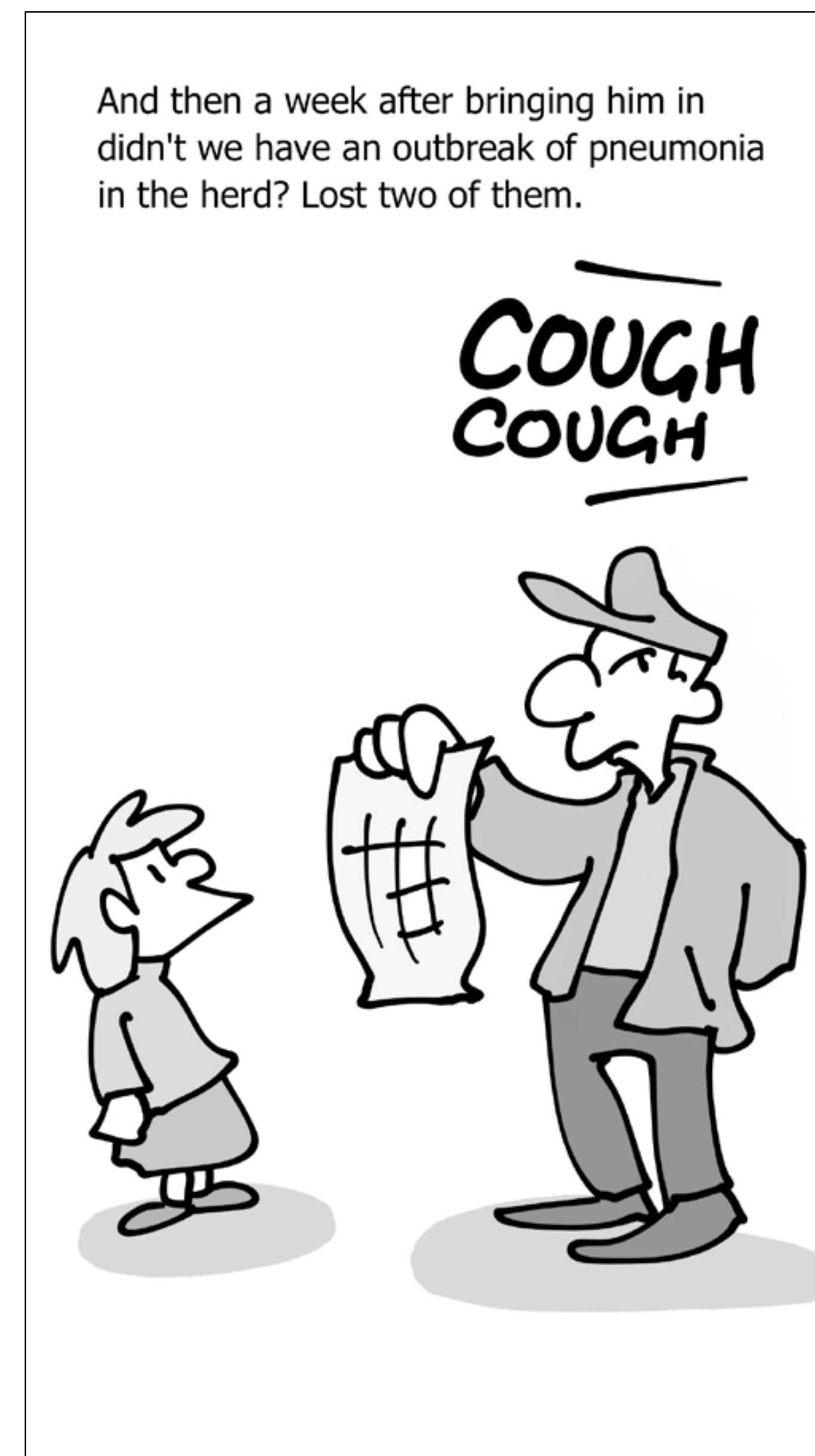
A CLOSED HERD

Page 1



A CLOSED HERD

Page 2



A TALK WITH A NEIGHBOUR

Page 1

Dairy Farmer James meets his neighbour Seán, who mentions that he just had cattle tested for Johne's disease.

"I'm not worried about it," says James, "my herd all look fine."

"That's what I thought too..." says Seán.



Seán explains that a cow with Johne's disease might appear to be in good health for years, yet for all that time it could be spreading infection.



"By the time it's clear that one animal is very sick," Seán tells James, "it could have spread through half your herd. The sick cow is only the tip of the iceberg."

"Well if that's the story I'm not even sure I want to get them tested," James says. "All you find out is that it's too late."

"No," says Seán, "it's the other way round. If you have it, your best hope is to prevent it spreading and control it. As a matter of fact, one of my cows tested positive."

A TALK WITH A NEIGHBOUR

Page 2

"I'm sorry to hear that," says James.
"Ah," says Seán. "It's not the end of the world. That was just the blood test. We separated her out and sent off samples for dung tests, those are more accurate. The vet said there's a good chance she'll turn out fine in the end."

"A big panic over nothing then!" James laughs.



"Well," says Seán, "maybe. But it's better to have one false positive than to miss a sick cow and lose the whole herd."

"True for you," James agrees.



Soon James is in touch with the vet, who can carry out tests, interpret their results, and answer his questions about the signs to look out for and what sort of animal is most at risk.

Most importantly of all, he explains precautions James can take to prevent the spread of Johne's disease within the herd - ones which will not only be effective against Johne's, but also other nuisance illnesses such as scour.

SIGNS OF CALVING

Page 1

Dairy farmer Tom is helping his student Mary to lime the cubicle beds. Tom notices that a cow is close to calving and needs to be drafted into the calving shed. "How do you know she's close to calving?" asks Mary.



"Well, there are a few things I keep an eye on," said Tom, "even though they won't all have the same signs."



"First thing is to print off the expected calving list from the HerdPlus website and keep it in your pocket. That list tells you the date when a cow is expected to calve based on AI or service dates."



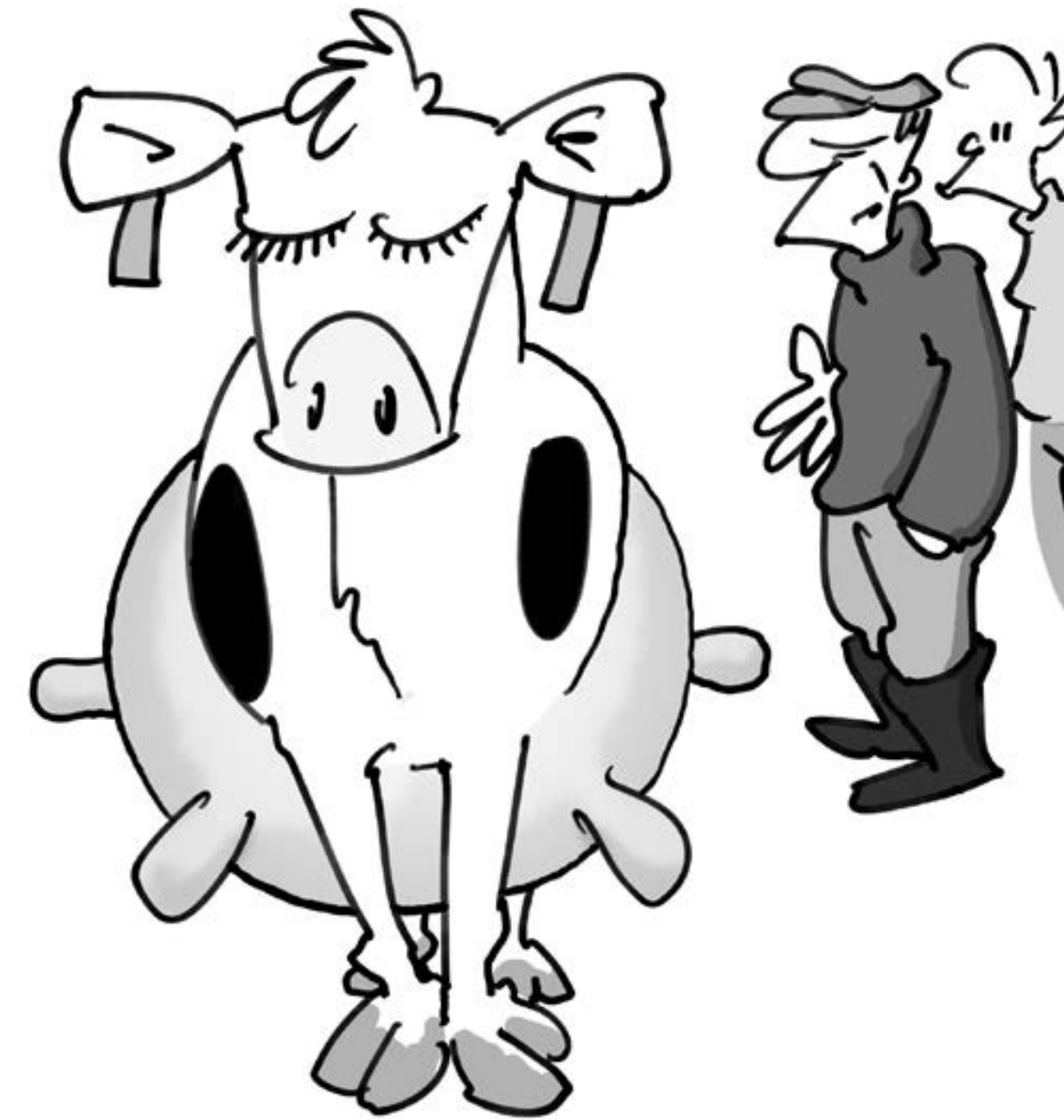
SIGNS OF CALVING

Page 2

"A week or two before the first cow is due to calve I pay extra attention to the cows when I'm doing jobs in the cubicle shed."



"One thing to look at is her udder. She'll start bagging up for a while before she is due to calve but when the time gets close the udder will get much bigger much faster," said Tom.



"Some cows can trick you though. Last year I got caught out with a cow that had only a small springing and she calved in the cubicles. I made a note of it and this year I made sure to watch out for her and check for other signs".



SIGNS OF CALVING

Page 3

"Here," said Tom, "feel this cow. See her pins are rock hard - whereas if you feel the cow that is close to calving you won't be able to feel the pin bones as they have sunken or dropped."



"Look at the cow's vulva; the one that is close to calving has a swollen, loose and relaxed vulva."

"You must know your cows really well I guess to see all these signs," said Mary.



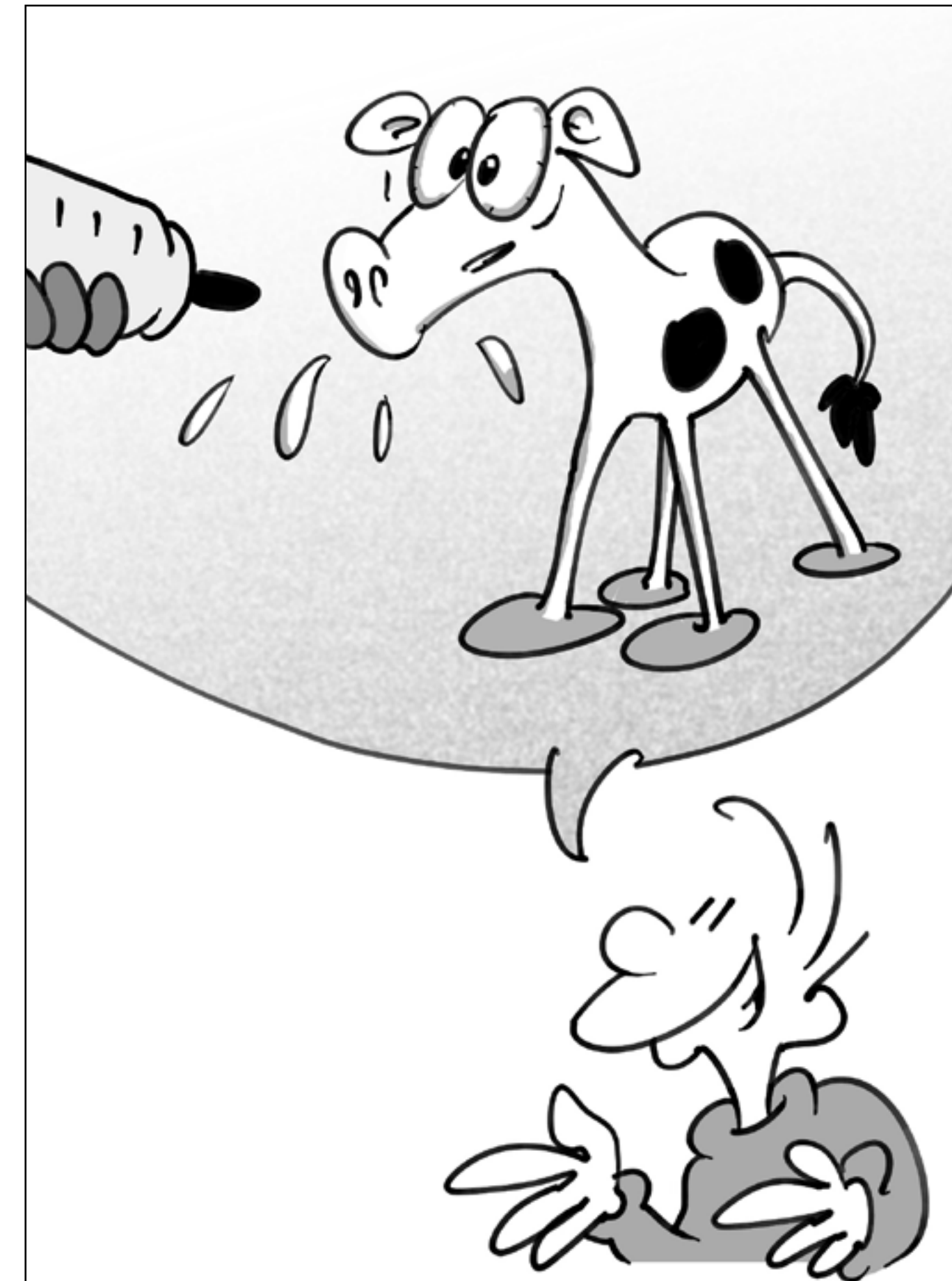
"Yes," said Tom. "That's why I walk through the shed as often as I can to keep an eye on them as they can change very quickly."



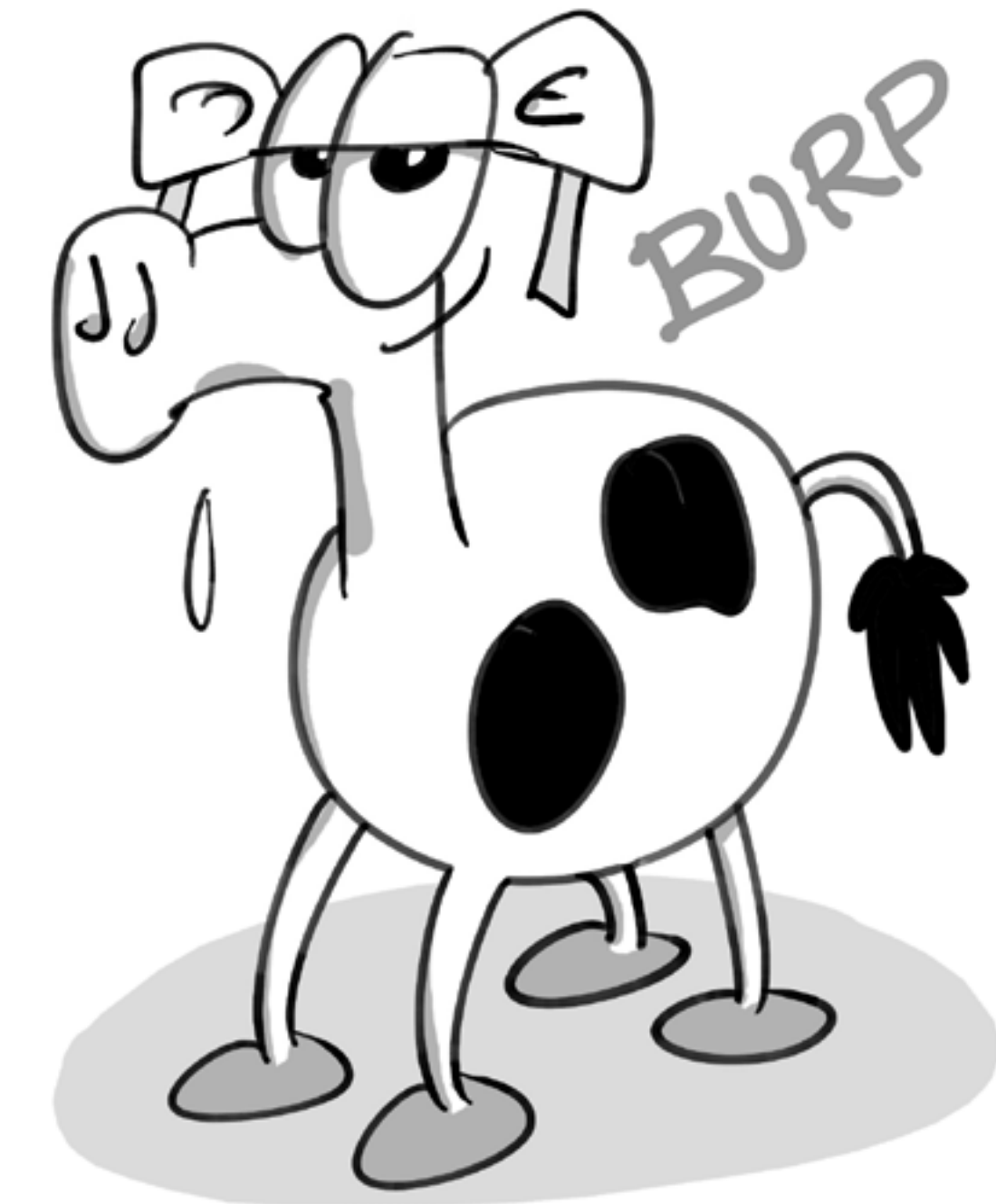
THE MAHER FAMILY

Page 1

For the Maher family, seeing a new calf being born and getting its first feed is a bonding moment for them. They love to just sit back and watch the new born calf after it's had its first drink of colostrum.



"I could act it out," Peter said. "They give a little snort!... eventually they are just drinking and sucking away and eventually the calf just goes 'huff' and then they are away, you know they are full and have got the best possible start to life!"

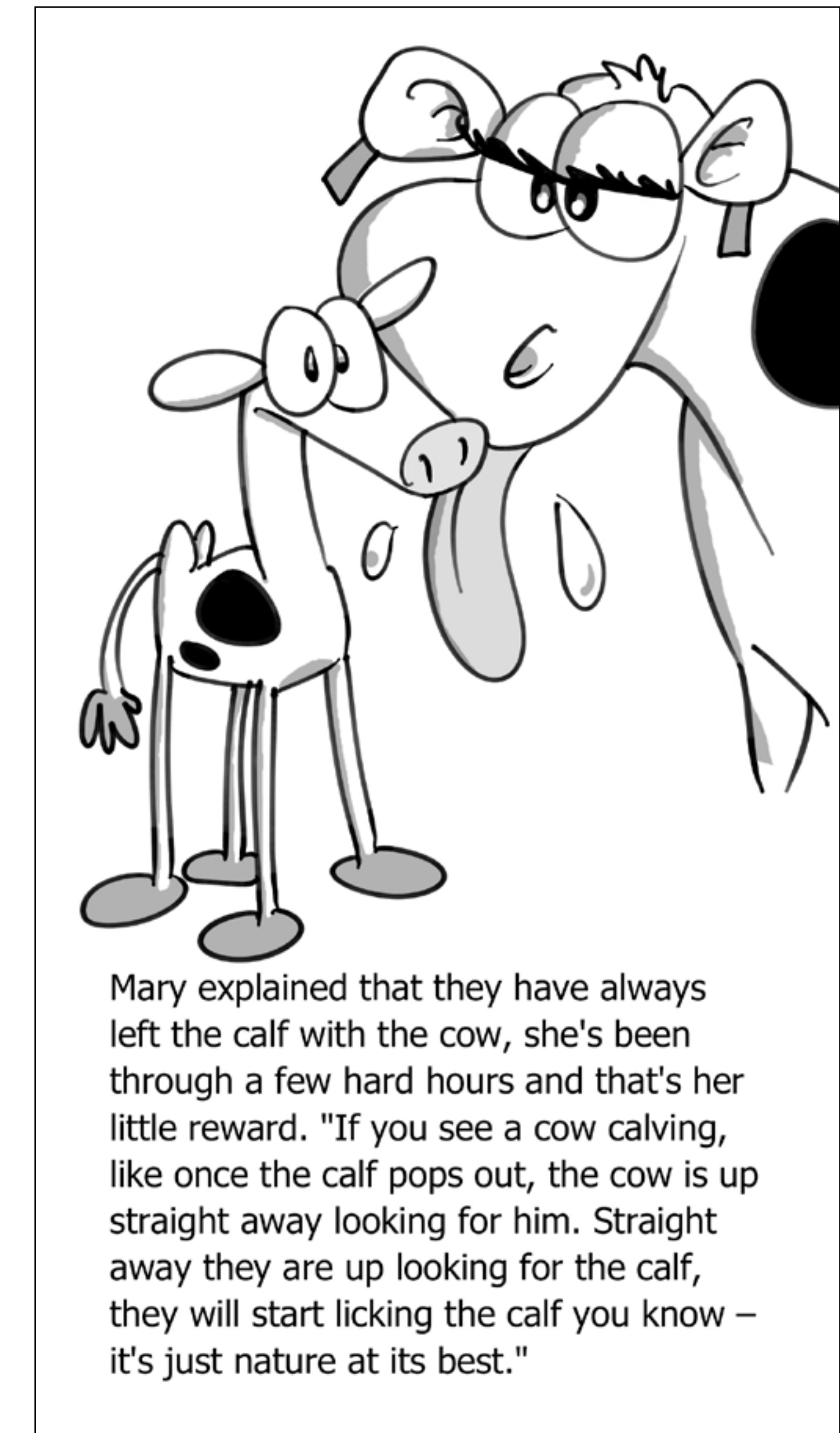
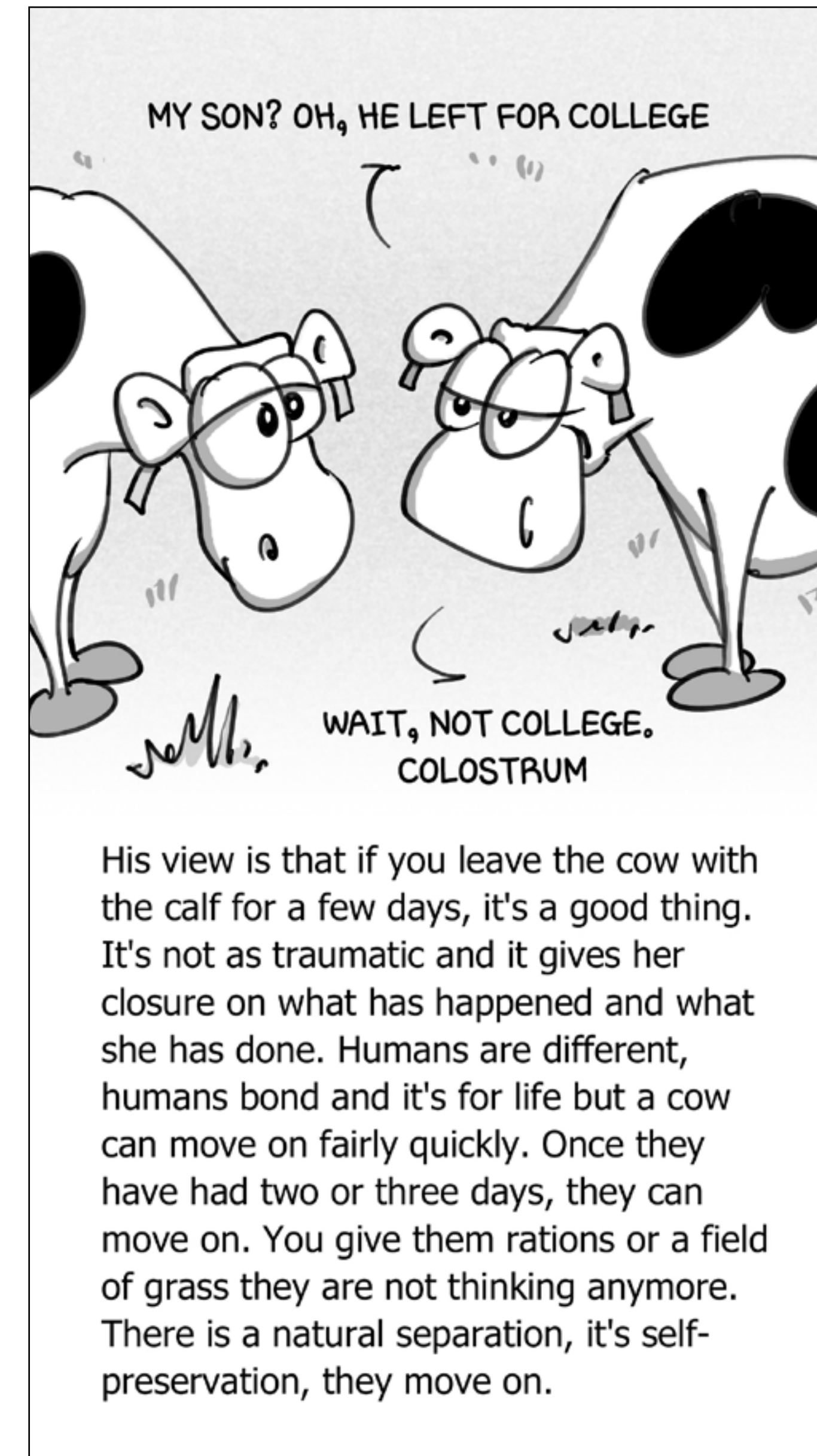


Peter's father Peadar described how the calf's belly fills out and it's almost like the next generation has started. "The previous ten months you have put that cow in calf, you have decided what bull you were going to use and now you are over."

Mary, Peter's mother, said "after the hours of hardship, the actual calf is born and now it's like 'job done, calf fed' – once you have the colostrum in."

THE MAHER FAMILY

Page 2



VETS TALKING

Vincent, a vet, advises that calves should be calved in individual calving pens.



Sophie Flor Rebecca Vincent



Well that's a fine how-d'you-do...



Most cows when they're calving, they defecate. But in individual calving pens you're containing the exposure to one animal...

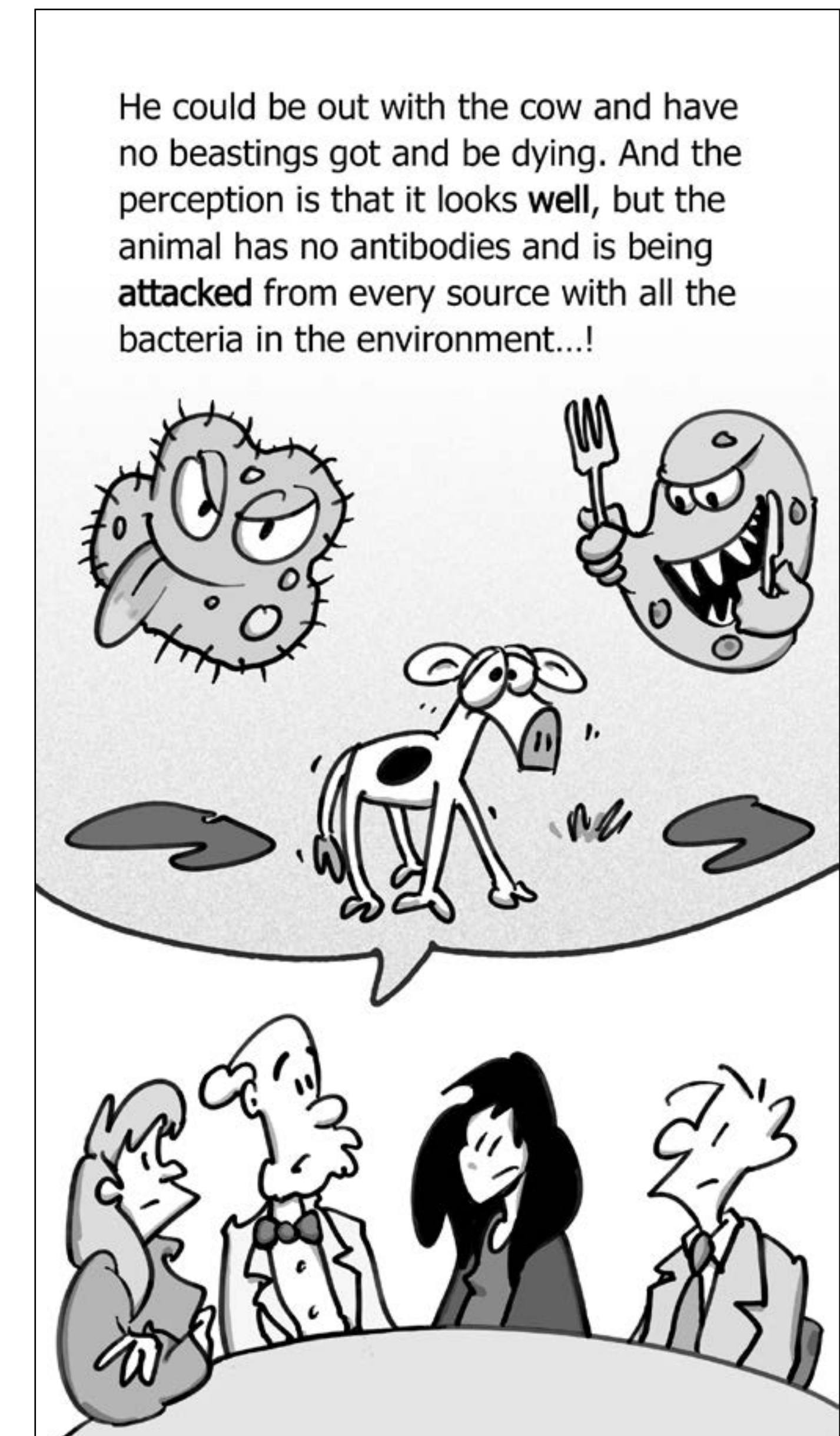


But what then? The perception with removing the calf is that it is wet and cold. But how badly off do you think the calf really is as a result of being removed? Do you think it warrants using a lamp on the calf, for example?



VETS TALKING

Page 2



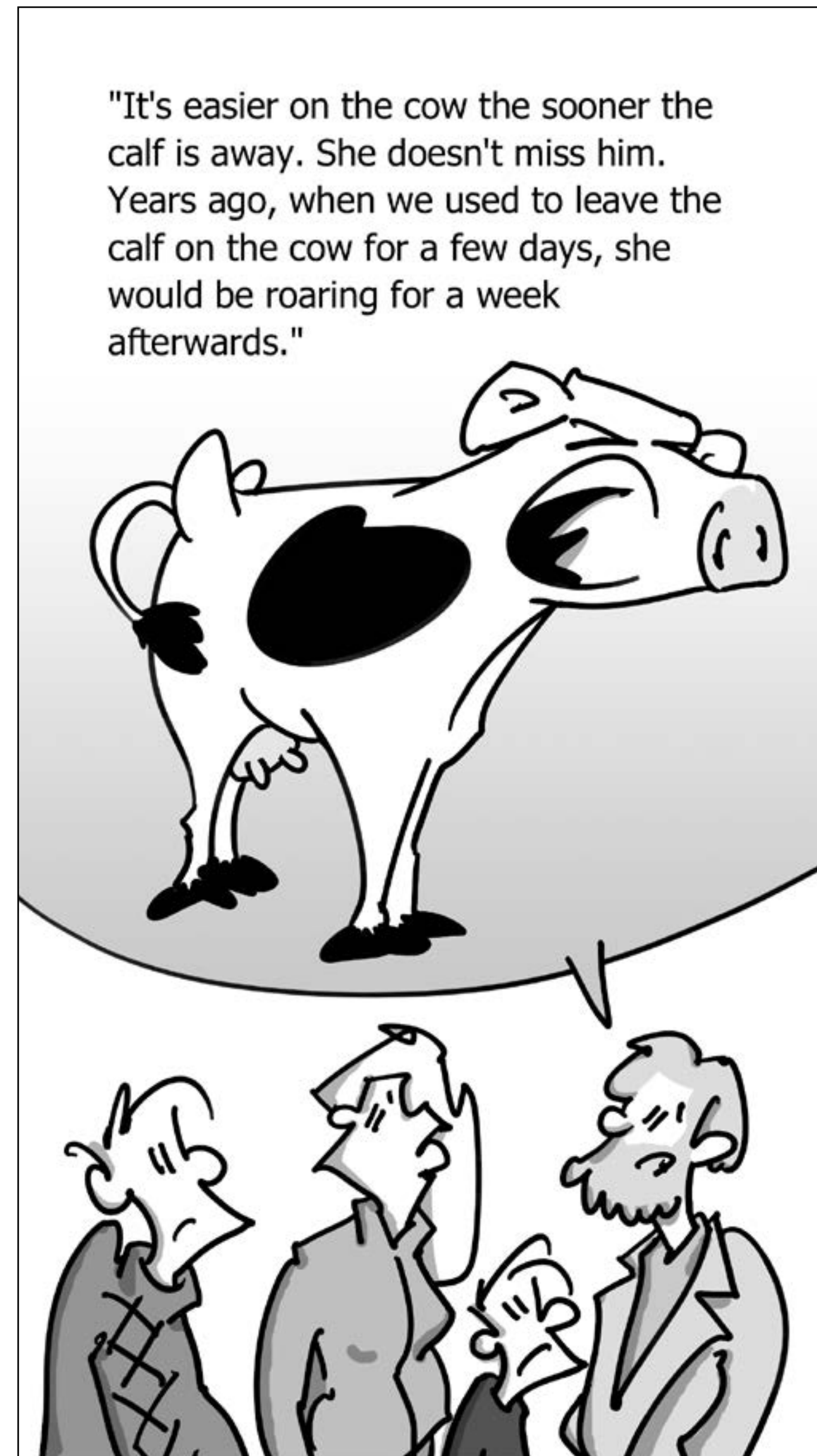
DISCUSSION GROUP MEETING ON A HOST FARM

Page 1



DISCUSSION GROUP MEETING ON A HOST FARM

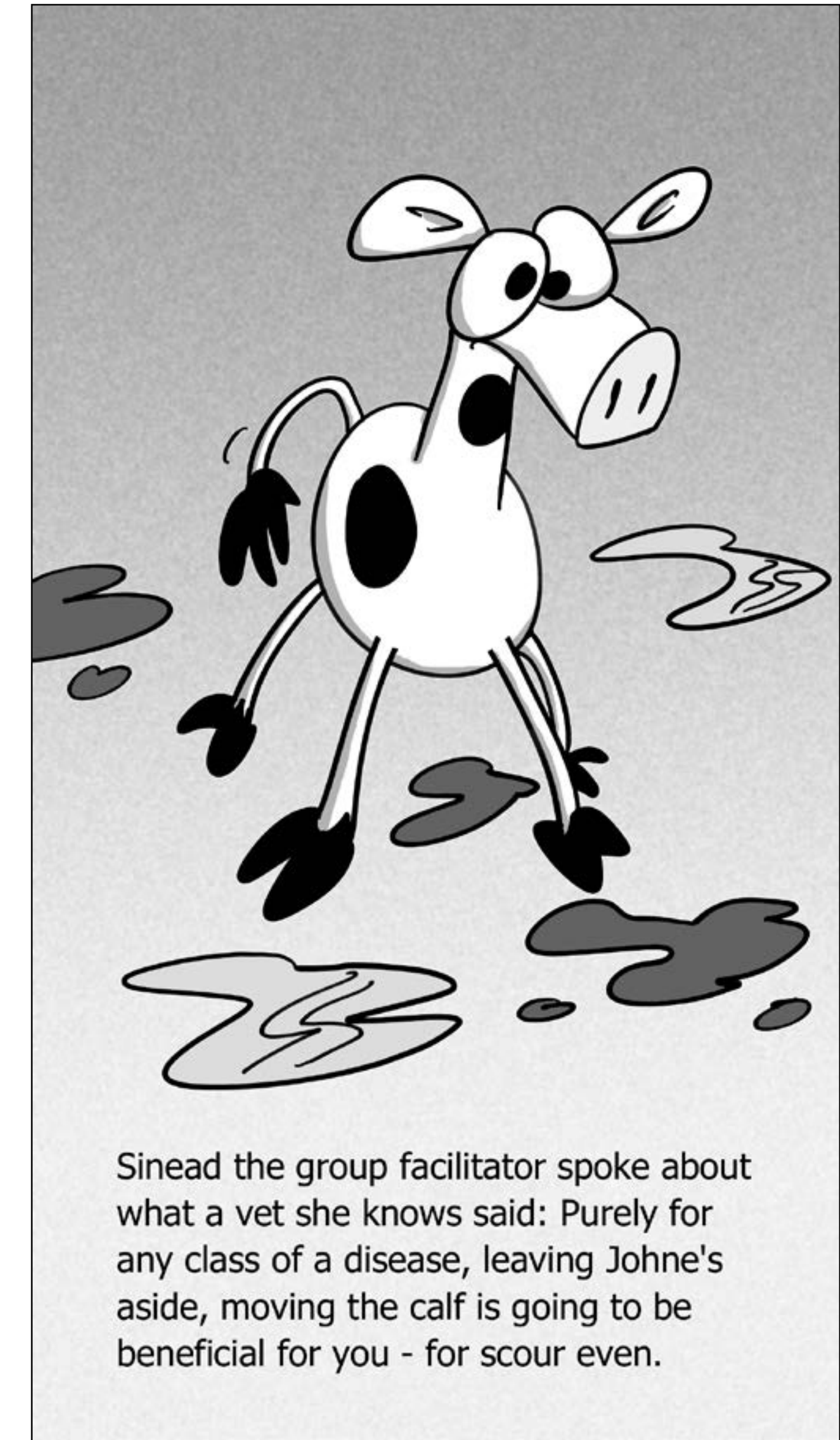
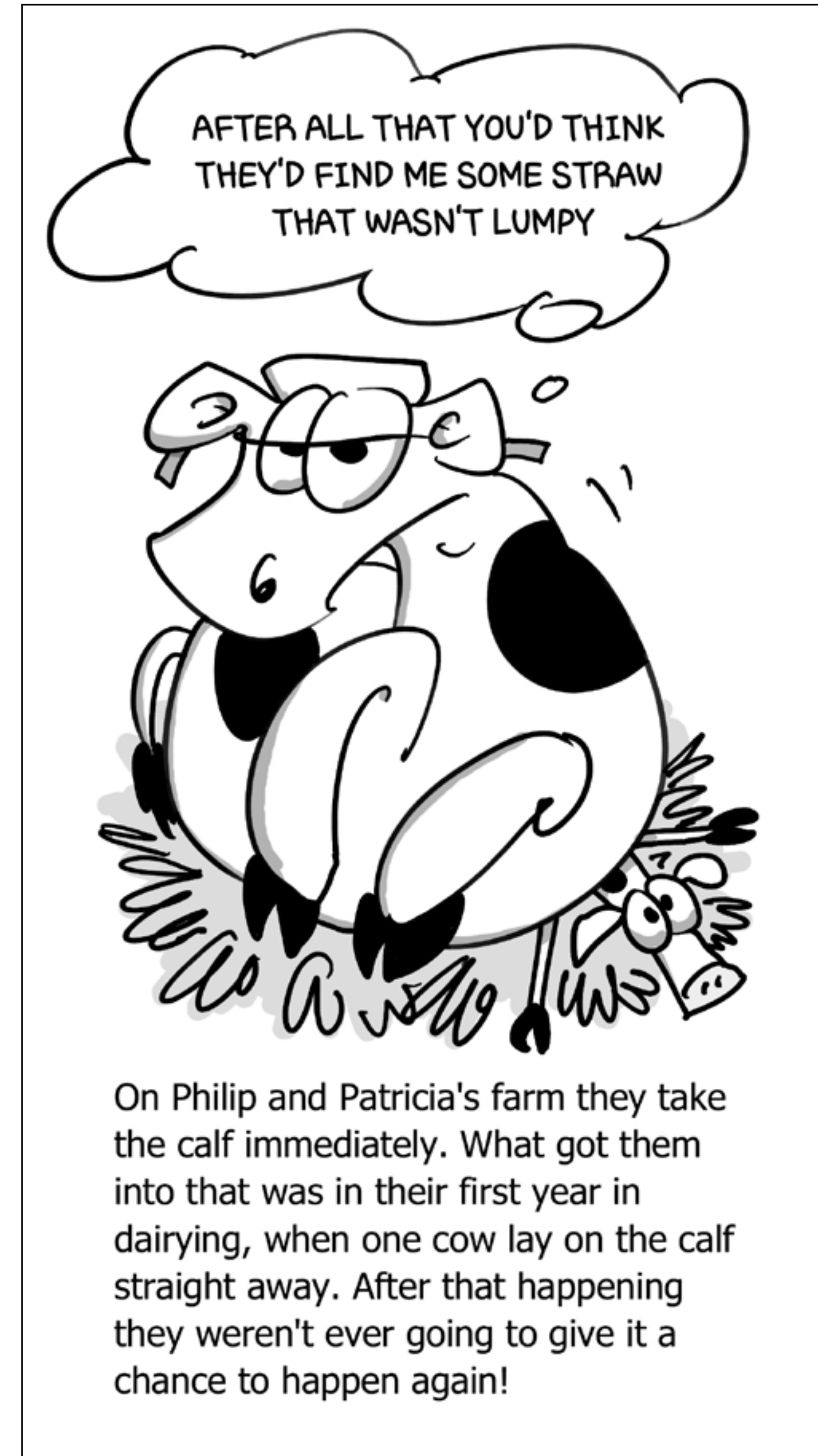
Page 2



Maura is troubled by public opinion. "The public perception might be that it is cruel to the calf to take it away from its mother. But the reality is that it's for the benefit of the calf that it's done, and it's **harder for the farmer** - even when it comes to labour - to move the calf straight away when he's born."

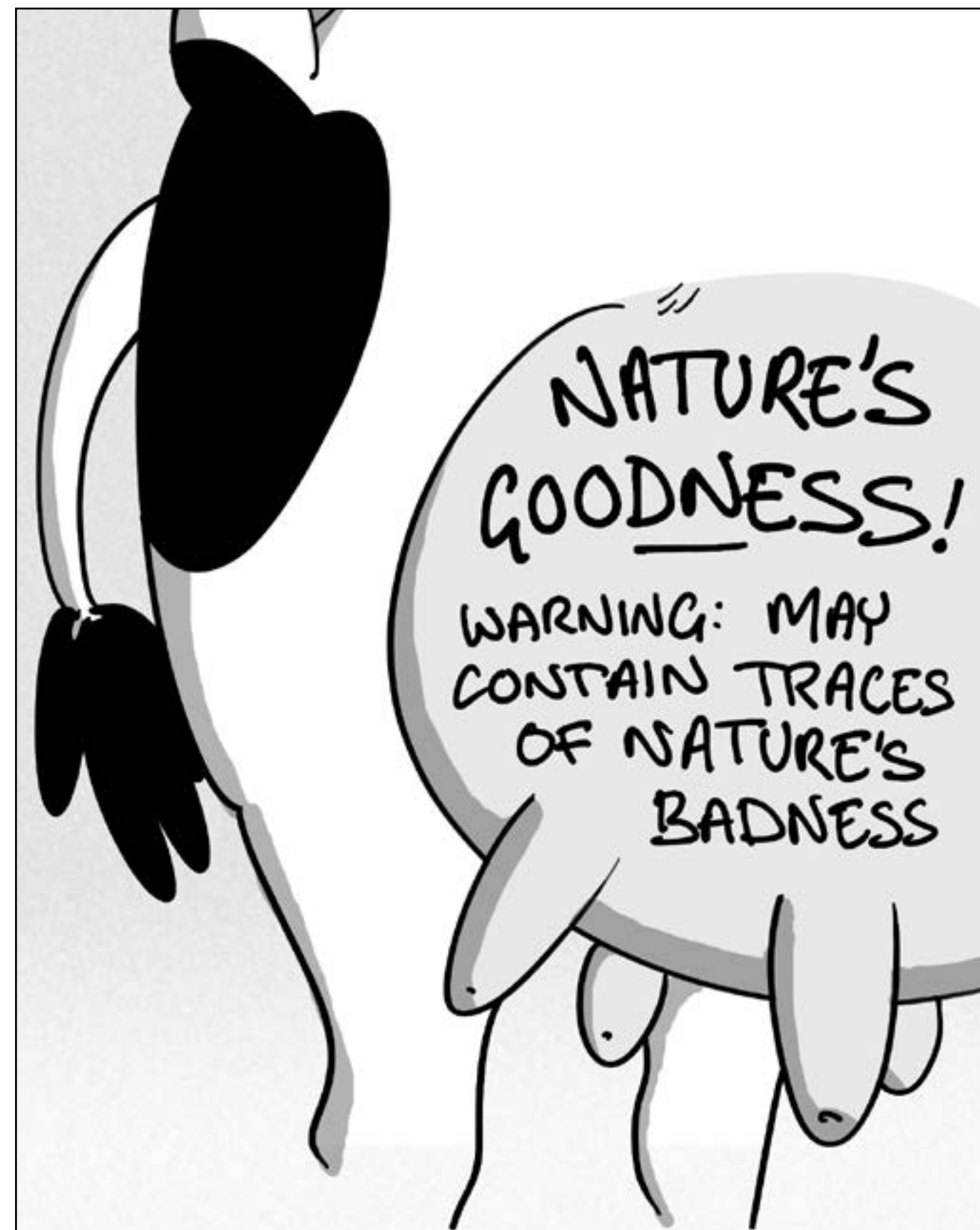
DISCUSSION GROUP MEETING ON A HOST FARM

Page 3



DISCUSSION GROUP MEETING ON A HOST FARM

Page 4



While testing is one aspect of identifying Johne's, the other thing is minimising the spread of it within the herd whether you know you have it or not. There are steps you can take for good calf health, and moving the calf is one of the most important steps...

Seamie said, "I agree. If I never prevented Johne's – it has paid for itself. I never needed antibiotics, never needed the vet."



Peadar was listening to what was being said and he was thinking to himself that they would have to have a hard talk about changing things on the Maher farm... With all the effort that had gone into expansion, extra precautions will have to be taken.



SAFETY

Page 1



Pat, an experienced dairy farmer, was explaining to Siobhán, a student: "It's important to have a proper thing to take the calf away, like a calf barrow. He's slippy and slimy, you need something to put him into."



"Make sure the cow has her back turned... A cow took a run at me and it was me she was going for, not the calf. You could easily be on your own... particularly at night."



Siobhán asked "Is it always easy to do? She'd often be surrounded, there could be five cows around a cow calving."

SAFETY

Page 2

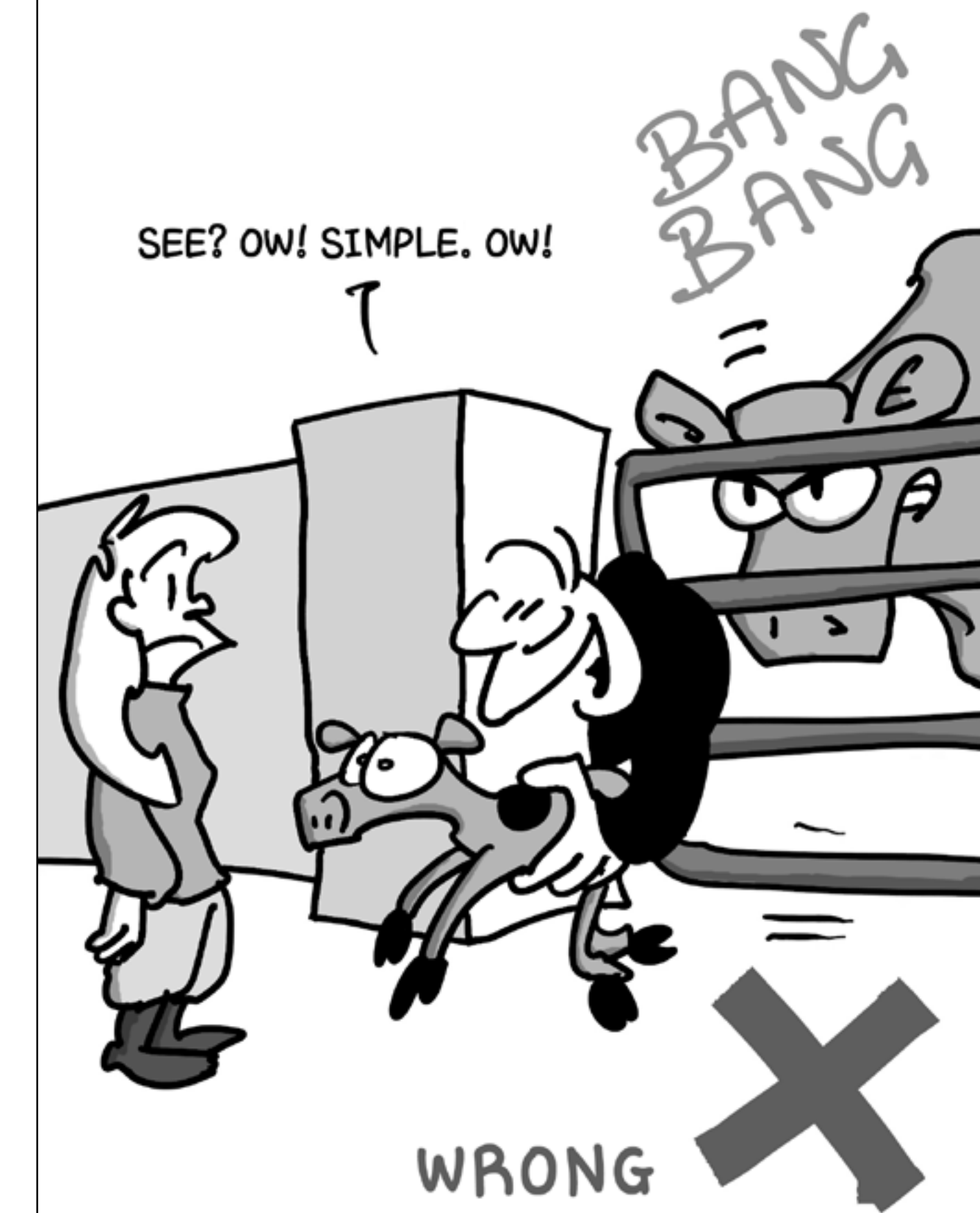
Pat's response: "That's not ideal and it's risky. The ideal is having individual calving pens and the cow in a head gate. If you want to be sure to be safe it's the best way."



"Or move the cow out of the pen."



"Or if you could have a gate between yourself and the cow, push in the gate so you can take out the calf. But, you have to be careful doing that."



SAFETY

Page 3

"Long hours and night work make you tired and you can be less clued-in to an aggressive cow."

I COULD USE A COFFEE. WOULD YOU LIKE ONE?

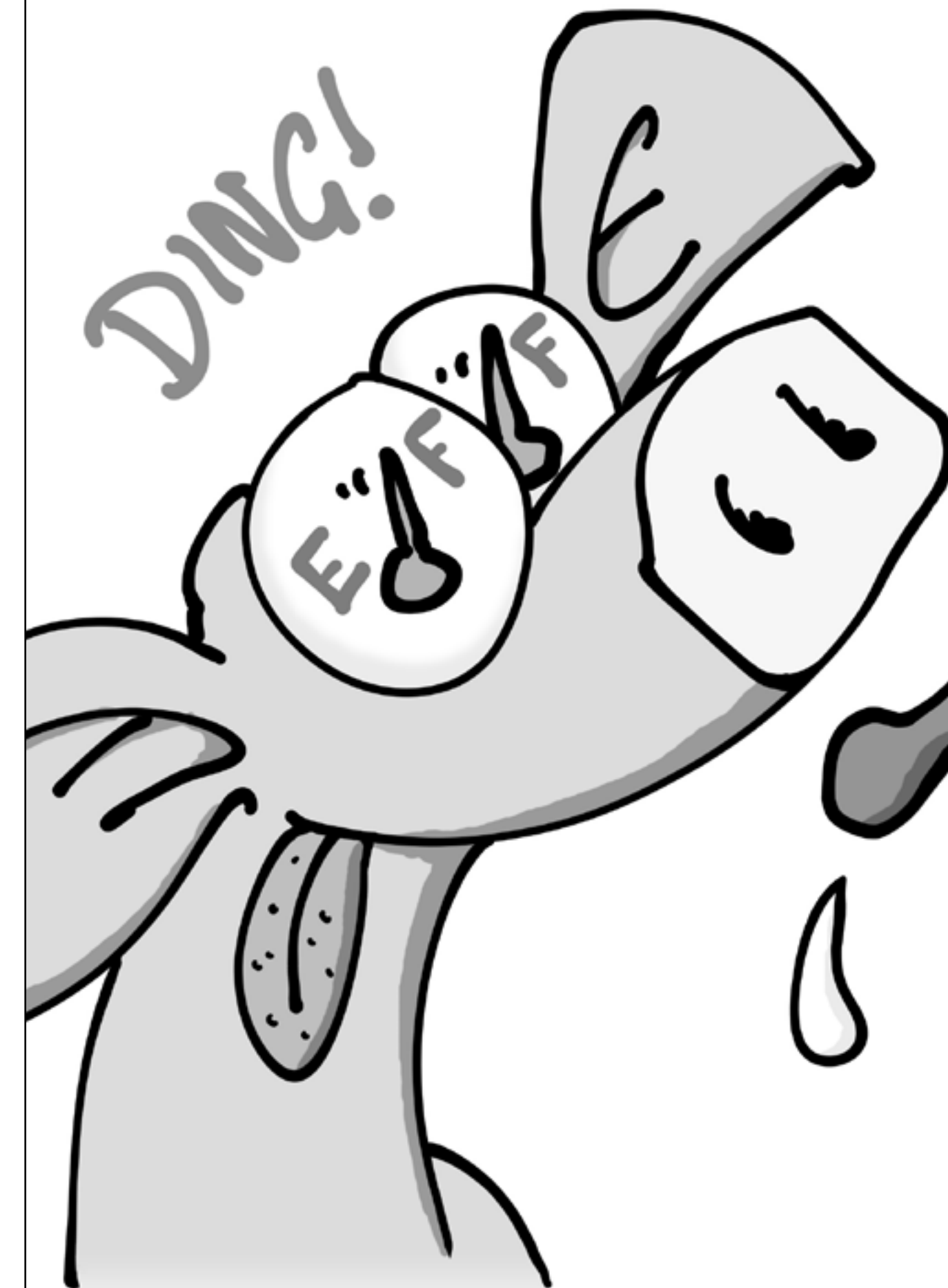


"I know," said Siobhán. "The quietest of them all can turn out to be the worst one of the lot of them."

COLOSTRUM FEEDING



Sinéad the facilitator said that "the quicker you get colostrum into the new born calf, there's protection going into him straight away. That's the big thing."



"After moving the calf away from the cow, you'll be able to get colostrum into him straight away. Three litres. That's giving him the best chance."



Patricia said, "I like the bottle but if it's looking to save time we are, it'd only take five minutes to feed by tube. Either way they'll have their three litres straight away - good for preventing scour and everything."