

# What can the new feeding buckets do?

This new generation of feeding buckets for calves is colourful and features valves to ensure a high standard of hygiene. top agrar had them tested in practice.

**M**ore than 17,500 times a year Elke Fuchs from Schlier hangs a feeding bucket on a calf igloo. Marina Albinger from Biberach-Winterreute supplies about 30 calves with ad libitum feeding every day. It is therefore understandable that the two dairy farmers from Baden-Württemberg are particularly interested in robust buckets that are easy to handle and can be clea-

ned easily and thoroughly. In response, manufacturers have not only added transparent and coloured buckets to their range, but have also further developed their suction valves to ensure faster installation and higher hygiene standards.

## TESTED MODELS

To find out whether the innovations will prove themselves in practice, the two



One of the testers: Marina Albinger, dairy farmer from Winterreute (district of Biberach)



How do the new feeding bucket models benefit everyday life? Dairy farmer Elke Fuchs from Schlier (district of Ravensburg) tested them for top agrar..

## 1-Click teat and valves

With our new HIKO 1-Click valve, a new era in terms of ease of use and maximum hygiene begins. The installation of the new system is done in two simple steps.



- ✓ Easy
- ✓ Quick
- ✓ Hygienic

(watch video)

dairy farmers spent three months testing for top agrar in spring 2020. The following manufacturers provided their feeding bucket models and valves for the test (see overview page R 30):

- Akroh with yellow screw valve
- Gewa-Gelle with super-clean valve
- Hiko with 1-Click valve
- Kerbl with hygienic valve and Flix-Clip valve.

For comparison, conventional grey plastic buckets with ball valve and sealing ring from the respective manufacturer were used.

### MATERIAL AND SHAPE

Results: The testers could not find any significant differences between the bucket material and the models. They are all made of robust plastic and well manufactured.

However, the octagonal bucket shape of Akroh does not fit well on all igloos and is more complicated to clean than round models. There is also an additional risk of dirt settling in the corners. An arched or sloped bucket bottom as in the case of Gewa, Hiko and Kerbl is less decisive for emptying than the sloped hanging on the igloo, is the verdict. As a special feature Kerbl offers a special pin on the outside of the bucket to clip the teat during the drying process. Hiko buckets have hanging slots on the bottom.

Gewa provides valve parts and suckers that are placed on the beveled bucket bottom for drying.. The water should be able to drain through a slit.

### ASSEMBLY AND FIT OF THE VALVES

The valves are the central components of the feeding buckets. There's no doubt about it: During the test, they all work, the calves get the buckets empty. Nevertheless, there are clear differences in handling: Hiko provides the most convincing solution with the 1-Click valve. It consists only of the valve body including the non-return flap, which is easily and quickly attached to the teat from the inside of the bucket and is then fixed.

### READ QUICKLY

**top agrar** had tested various feeding buckets and suction valves by two practitioners.

**The 1-Click-valve** made by Hiko convinces by easy installation, firm fit and good cleaning possibilities.

**More effort** in handling is required for the valves from Akroh, Gewa and Kerbl.

**Gewa and Kerbl** appeal with details such as clearly legible litre scales.

This hygienic solution requires a special natural rubber teat with a perforated upper edge instead of a rubber seal. The valve is not visible on the outside of the bucket, so that the calf has the full length of the teat available for drinking.

With the other valves, the installation is much more complex, because they consist of more individual parts. Moreover, some parts are too tight or even come off. The yellow screw valve with non-return flap from the Dutch company Akroh and the super-clean valve from Gewa both share the same problem as the well-known ball valve: They initially provide a good closure, but the fit gradually deteriorates due to wear or slippage of the rubber ring. In the case of Akroh, a special sealing ring is also required, which one of our testers was not able to buy in the usual agricultural stores. An advantage is that the suction cross on the teat of the Akroh valve can be adjusted after installation without the valve rotating with it. Such adjustment is not possible with the Super-Clean valve from Gewa or the bayonet lock on the hygienic valve from Kerbl.

The Gewa-Valve must be tightened with both valve screws in opposite directions to ensure that it is tight. Sometimes the farmers' wives help themselves with a cloth. The assembly of an ordinary ball valve is comparatively easier, they say. Kerbl even supplies its own key tool for its hygienic valve. Because you can't always get it open without one.

Another weak point of the innovative hygienic valve is that the small suction elbow often loosens by itself and ends up in the milk. One of the two test farms reports that even Kerbl's FlixClip valve does not fit securely, and the front clip sometimes rests in the straw. With just two robust parts, it can be assembled quickly and without tools, however, as with the 1-Click valve, a special teat with a perforated upper edge is required. The small non-return flaps of the valves can get lost. That is why Hiko has double secured its valves and also sells replacement valves.

## CLEANING OF THE VALVE

The 1-Click valve from the manufacturer Hiko also performs best in terms of thorough cleaning. All other valves require more effort because they have to be disassembled into their individual parts first. „That’s why people shy away from a thorough cleaning,“ say our testers.

Compared to the ball valves, the other new valves also have advantages, because with brushes of different sizes you can easily reach everywhere.

## COLOUR AND LITRE SCALE

The practitioners clearly prefer the transparent as well as the colour-

transparent buckets, regardless of the model, compared to full-colour buckets.

In the case of Kerbl, the practitioners would like to see a lower colour intensity in the coloured transparent ones, so that the level can be read more easily from the outside.

## TEST VARIANTS AND RESULTS

Modell	Akroh		Gewa		Hiko		Kerbl		
Capacity	10 l		9 l		9 l		8 l		
Bucket shape	octagonal		flattened on both sides		flattened on both sides		flattened on both sides		
Material bucket and valve	Plastic Rubber seal		Plastic Rubber seal		Plastic	Plastic Rubber seal	Plastic		Plastic Rubber seal
Valve	Yellow Screw Valve	Ball- Valve	Super- Clean- Valve	Ball- Valve	1-Click- Valve	Ball- Valve	Hygienic- Valve	FlixClip- Valve	Ball- Valve
Indiv. parts Valve	5	3	6	3	1	3	4	2	3
Teat	Standard teat		Standard teat	Standard teat	Special teat	Standard teat	Standard teat	Special teat	Standard teat
Available bucket colours	all colours, transparent col. transparent		grey, transparent col. transparent (4)		grey, transparent col. transparent (5)		grey, transparent col. transparent (6)		
Litre scale on bucket	inside (1x), outside optional		inside (2x), plus outside for transparent buckets						
Special features	Lid- hanging		sloped bottom, Drainage slit, lid hanging.		sloped bottom, Drainage slit, lid hanging.		arched bottom, special teat Hanging for drying at the bucket		
Price in € incl. tax (bucket, valve, teat)	Approx. 10,65	Approx. 10,10	Specialist trade calculates price itself		9,95 – 11,95	8,50 – 9,50	12,99	10,99	7,99
<b>Test results</b>									
Processing/Stability	++		++		++		++		
Handling Bucket	+		++		++		++		
Fit of the valve and teat	+	+	+	+	++	+	-	-	+
Seal quality	o	o	o	o	++	o	+	+	o
Dis/assembling Valve	o	+	o	+	++	+	o	++	+
Different teats possible	++	++	++	++	-	++	++	-	++
<b>Cleaning</b>									
Bucket	o		+		+		+		
Valve or indiv. parts	+	o	+	o	++	o	+	+	o
<b>Marking/Colour</b>									
Readability of scaling	o		++		o		+		
Fill level easily visible from outside	+		++		+		+		
<b>Lid</b>									
Easy assembly	+		+		+		++		
Stable fit	+		++		++		++		
<b>Hanging on the igloo</b>									
Suitable for each bracket	o		+		+		+		
Stable hanging, Teat can be reached easily	o		+		++		+		

++ = very good + = good; o = satisfying; - = improvement needed

Source: top agrar, July 2020



The transparent HIKO feeding bucket TK9 incl. lid on an igloo.



Whether the transparent buckets have a shorter service life than full-colour buckets, e.g. due to a lower UV light resistance, could not be clarified within the scope of this test.

Embossed litre scales on the inside of the bucket, sometimes even on both sides, are standard for all manufacturers. However, the markings inside are almost always too small numbers and it is often difficult to read the milk foam. A quantity marking on the outside is especially helpful for farms with ad-libitum feeders. Except for Akroh, it is standard on transparent or colour-transparent buckets.

In this case, the buckets from Gewa score points through clearly assigned large black numbers that are easily recognisable from a distance. However, they already end up at seven instead of nine litres. In the case of Kerbl the numbers could be larger and with Hiko you have to look twice to be able to assign the litre mark to the respective number.

How long the black outer markings generally last remains open.

### HANGING ON THE IGLOO

The testers use simple bucket holders with two short and two long galvanised iron pins on their igloos.

All buckets can be hung well and stable. Only with the Calf-O-Tel plug-in boxes, which are also made of perforated plastic at the front, the octagonal bucket from Akroh did not fit well.

Larger valves such as those of Akroh, Gewa and Kerbl tend to stick to the

teat hole when inserting or removing the bucket. This is where Hiko's 1-Click valve or Kerbl's Flix-Clip valve prove their advantages, because the teat is almost the only thing that protrudes.

With Bucket Guard, Kerbl offers a bracket that is designed to prevent the buckets from being ejected by the calves. The practitioners rate the system as good, even if the assembly requires additional work. The same effect can be achieved with long pins on the bracket.

### LID

More than just a useful „accessory“ are the bucket lids, which are often also available in transparent versions. They keep away flies and keep the milk warm longer. Furthermore, the milk does not spill over when calves bump against the buckets. It is important that the lids are firmly attached to the bucket, especially on the igloo. With Kerbl and Gewa the hanging brackets pass through two slits in the lid. They are therefore suitable for both long and short brackets. In the case of Gewa, the angle of the brackets is not unimportant. Akroh and Hiko fit only on short brackets with their arched lids in the hanging area.

The easiest handling and the most stable fit on the bucket are shown by the lids from Kerbl (MilkGuard), which are equipped with an opening aid like Gewa. Even on the plastic igloos from Calf-O-Tel there is still enough space for the narrow Kerbl lids. For the other models, you have to press the lids well from all sides to make them fit.

Where to put them in the milk chamber or during transport with the Milk Taxi? The lateral eyelet on the Gewa lid, which also serves as an opening aid, would be a solution. However, the handle remains attached to it when the closed bucket is picked up. With Akroh the lid can be hooked into the handle itself. The other models do not yet have a solution for this. @silvia.lehnert@topagrar.com

## OPINION

### What the manufacturers say

The four manufacturers of the feeding buckets tested comment on the test results:

**Akroh:** The fact that the octagonal bucket is more difficult to clean is not understandable. The sealing ring is currently being improved to make it less susceptible to wear. Due to the flattened front the bucket will hang well on most igloos. The lid fits tightly if you press it first at the back and then at the front of the bucket.

**Gewa:** To ensure that the Super-Clean valve is tight, the screw connection should be firmly in place. Therefore, assembly and disassembly required some force, but no tools. The food safety of the colours for the outer litre scale limits their durability.

**Hiko:** With the ball valve, it is possible to clean the ball chamber by removing the transverse pin. The outer litre scale will be improved with regard to the allocation of the numbers. To guarantee permanent marking, the company plans to switch to the more expensive flame treatment method.

**Kerbl:** Problems with the occasional falling out of individual parts are well known with the new valves. In the case of the hygienic valve, the suction elbow has now been enlarged so that it falls out less often. In the future, the new Flix-Clip valve should be able to be hooked into standard buckets for fixation via a short nib bold.

### HEFT +



More detailed images from the test can be found at [www.topagrar.com/eimertest2020](http://www.topagrar.com/eimertest2020)



The HIKO 1-Click valve can also be conveniently used for the 1-Click drinking bottle from HIKO. The system works for both products.

## 1-Click teat and valves

With our new HIKO 1-Click valve, a new era in terms of ease of use and maximum hygiene begins. The installation of the new system is done in two simple steps.

How it works:

1



Put 1-CLICK Teat on 1-CLICK valve



Insert 1-CLICK teat with 1-CLICK valve from the inside through the bucket opening and pull it through strongly - done!

Package contents:

1-CLICK teat + 1-CLICK valve



Our complete product range: [www.hiko.com](http://www.hiko.com)

## HIKO® 1-Click-Drinking bucket & 1-Click-Feeding Bottle

- Large opening for easy filling
- Complete draining thanks to 1-click teat and valve
- Quick and easy installation of the 1-click teat & valve
- Easily legible liter scale for easy identification of the fill level
- quick, easy and hygienic cleaning
- very stable and robust
- "Fair calf teat" because it is made from certified natural rubber
- Other accessories, e.g. Lid for drinking bucket available
- Made in Germany
- low costs as only one valve / teat system is required for the drinking bucket and feeding bottle



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