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EFFECTS OF WEATHER VARIABLES ON WEANING WEIGHTS AND GROWTH RATES OF FRIESIAN x BUNAJI HEIFER CALVES

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Data consisting of birth weights at 3, 6 and 12 months records of 309 Friesian x Bunaji heifer calves born between 1980 and 1991 were analysed to determine the effects of weather variables on weaning weights and growth rates. Calves were raised by either bucket feeding or suckling methods. Under the bucket feeding system, calves were separated from the dams after 3-5 days postpartum and fed fresh whole milk until 3 months of age. They were moved to an outdoor herd and fed free-choice with concentrate and hay rations until they attained 6 months of age. The average calf weights at birth, 3, 6 and 12 months of age were 21.7 ± 0.27 , 60.9 ± 0.9 , 86.4 ± 1.3 and 134.0 ± 1.9 kg respectively. Average rainfall, relative humidity and temperature were 910.78 mm, 43.1 % and 24.6°C respectively. The relationships between these variables and weaning weights and growth rates were discussed.