



Canadian's Leg

By Janet Hainstock

I shouted, "A calf is out and is running around in the yard!"

My mom quickly phoned my dad, who came running into the yard while calling our dog, Taff, to help him.

Together they chased the calf, named Nigel, back behind the corral fence.

Now, that same calf is a two year old heifer.

I was standing on the railing of the corral fence watching Nigel push the big cows with her head and then scamper away before they could push her.

But then Nigel slipped, just as a big cow stepped toward her.

I hollered, "Dad, come quick! Nigel's leg looks funny."

My Dad got into the corral and knelt down to look closely at Nigel's leg, "Nigel's leg does look funny, she has a big bump on it. I am going to call the veterinarian, so she can have a look at it too."

When she came to our farm, she checked all four of Nigel's legs.

But when she felt her right, front leg, she said, "Oh! Oh! I think it could be broken. I'd like you to bring her into the clinic, so I can x-ray it."

My Dad and I looked at each other. That sounds easy, but it usually isn't and it wasn't this time either.

My Dad backed the little stock trailer up to the loading chute by the corrals.

When my dad, Taff, and I tried to load Nigel on the trailer, she wouldn't go near it.

My Dad said, "We need more help," as he phoned my mom and my little brother, Milo.

The four of us, plus Taff, walked slowly behind Nigel to move her up the stock trailer ramp.

The trouble was, Nigel would not move.

My Dad said, "I'll get the chop pail." He put in a scoop of dry oats and topped it off with Nigel's favourite food: silage made of a mixture of more oats with corn, barley, and millet.

Nigel lifted her head when she smelled the sweet odour of the silage in the pail.



She began to hobble toward it as my dad walked backwards up the stock trailer ramp, holding the pail just out of her reach.

Nigel limped and stopped and limped and stopped, then made a final wobbly three legged jump as she finally followed the chop pail and my dad right into the trailer.

My mom, brother, and I walked slowly behind Nigel and then closed the trailer door behind her.

We all hopped into the truck and drove to the veterinarian's with Nigel in the trailer behind us.

After the veterinarian x-rayed Nigel's leg, she said, "It really is broken. Your heifer will need a cast on it to help it heal."

"What colour do you boys think it should be?" she asked.

Milo and I had talked about our heifer's name.

When I named her Nigel, I thought she was a boy.

Now that I knew our calf was a girl, I wanted to give her a new name.

Milo and I looked at each other and said, "Red and white please", because now we wanted to change our heifer's name from "Nigel" to "Canadian".

Once we got her home, we put her in a separate pen, along with one other heifer.

Nigel, I mean, Canadian, likes to have company.

Now I have chores to do because they are in a pen that does not have a watering bowl.

I have to carry all the water that the two of them drink.

Each heifer can drink about 35 litres of water every day.

That is a lot of water to carry.

Just like dad, I give Canadian and her friend some oats and silage in a feed trough every day, too.

I have to do all this for five weeks while Canadian's leg heals.

Dad makes sure they have hay to eat and fresh oat straw for bedding.

My dad and I have to watch the clock too, because my school bus comes for me at 8:25 every morning.

Sometimes we forget to check the time and then I have to run really fast to get to the gate before the school bus leaves our yard.

Once I get on the school bus, I open my lunch box.

Then, I take a big drink of milk out of my thermos.

“Now that’s better”, I think to myself, as I get comfortable on the bus that will take me to school.