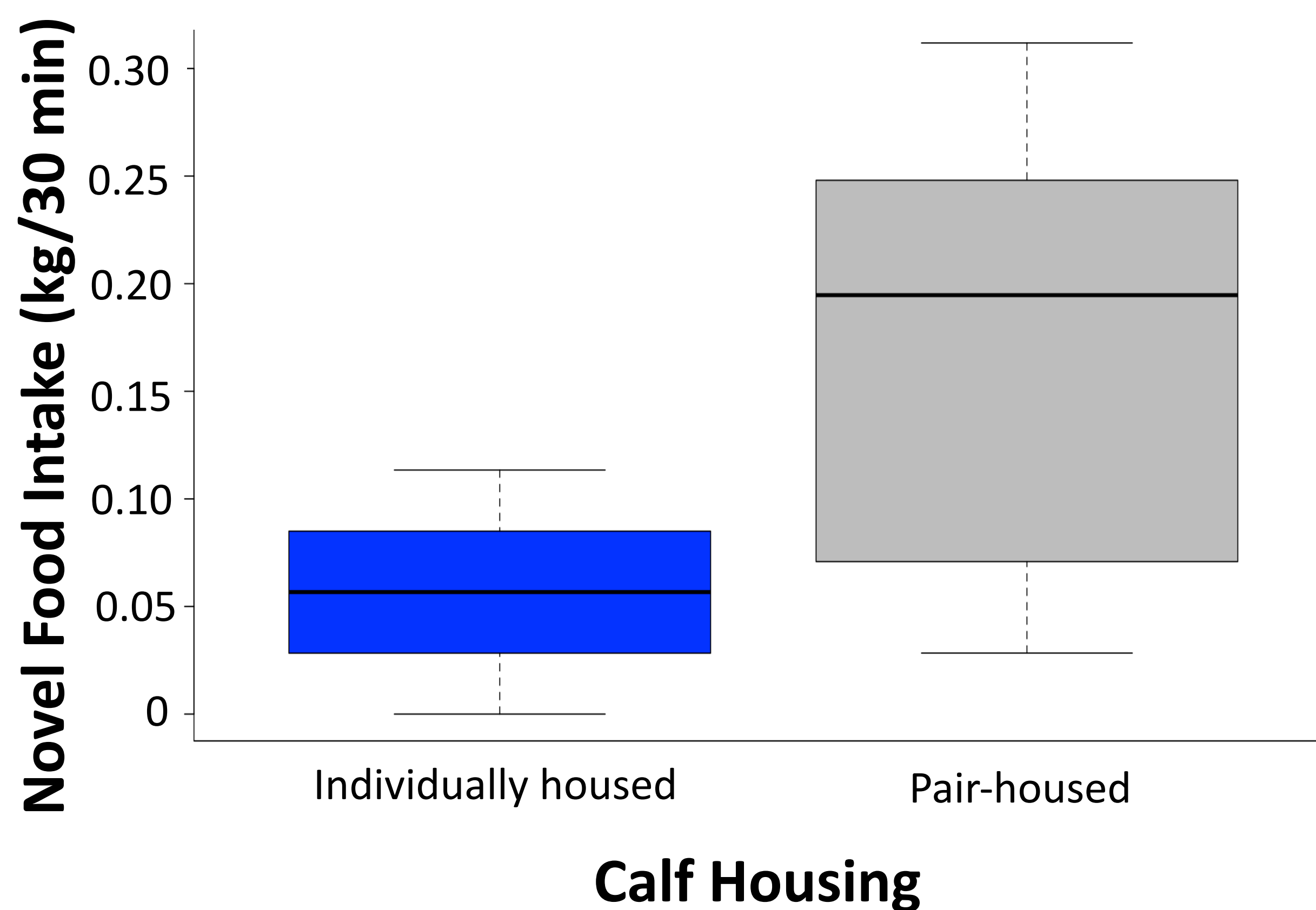


Milk-fed dairy calves are often housed individually in hutches. Social housing can increase solid feed intake and reduce food neophobia. A low-cost method of providing social contact is to pair adjacent hutches.

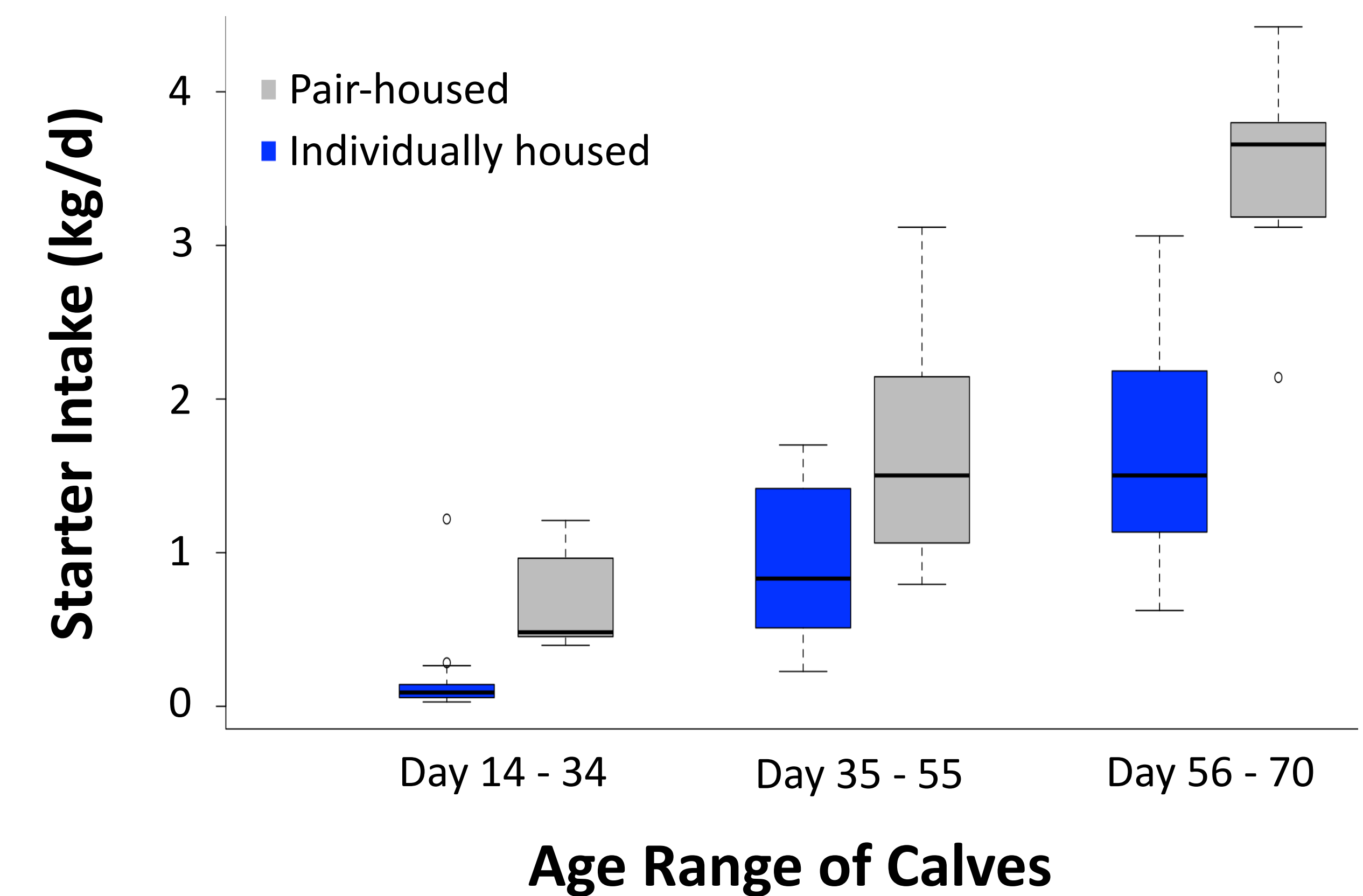
## Food neophobia test: Consumption of novel feed



## Objective and Methods



## Solid feed intake: d 14 to d 70 of life



**Figure 1 – Pair-housed calves are less fearful of novel feed:**

*When presented with new feed (silage-based TMR), calves housed in pairs ate more feed than individually housed calves; social buffering may reduce fearfulness in socially housed animals.*

### Objective:

To compare the effects of pair housing (using adjacent hutches) versus standard individual hutches on calf fearfulness and solid feed intake

### Methods:

Adjacent hutches were connected to provide calves access to both hutches and a common run. This study took place on a commercial dairy farm in Abbotsford, BC.

**Figure 2 – Pair-housed calves consumed more starter:**

*Calves housed in pairs ate more starter before and after weaning from milk compared to individually housed calves; social facilitation may lead to increased feed intake in socially housed animals.*

## Take Home Messages:

- Pair-housed calves consume more starter before and after milk weaning compared to individually housed calves
- Pair-housed calves are less fearful of novelty compared to individually housed calves
- Standard hutches can be easily modified to allow for the pair housing of calves