



THE
WOOD
VETERINARY
GROUP

FARM NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2025

February is all about Milk!

We have finally made it through what felt like a hundred days of January and whilst the weather isn't perfect, spring is coming and calving and lambing is upon us. #Februdairy is a great time to refresh our farm level management of colostrum for dairy and beef calves:

#ColostrumIsGold

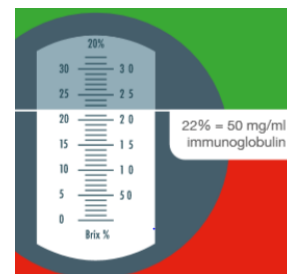
Despite a wide range of appearances, Colostrum is not all made equal. When we harvest Colostrum, it can look thick and a lovely yellow colour but both good and poor-quality colostrum can look the same so we need to find a way to test it before using it.

Colostrum not only provides antibodies that form the main part of the acquired immune system but it is also high in fat and protein to support heat regulation and energy in the first few days of life.

3 Qs of Colostrum:

Quality

- 22% or above specific gravity equates to 50mg/ml of antibodies. This colostrum is considered good quality for feeding and to store in the freezer for up to 1 year
- Refractometers are a very simple way of testing quality and uses only a droplet on the slide and can be done anywhere on farm. Order one from us at the office
- Hygiene is also very important as bacteria multiply at extremely high rates in colostrum and this directly impacts the absorption of antibodies. Make sure collection and feeding containers are immaculately clean and you have enough space to store colostrum in fridges and freezers – freezing flat in zip lock bags then allows for maximum storage capacity

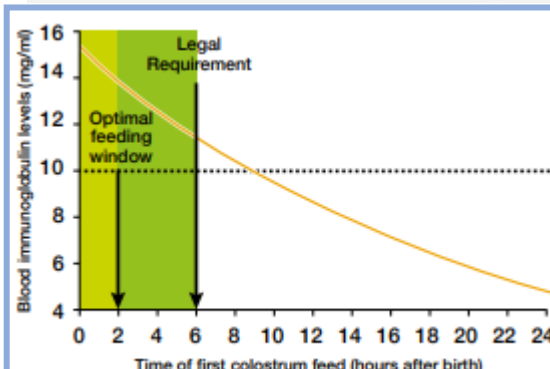
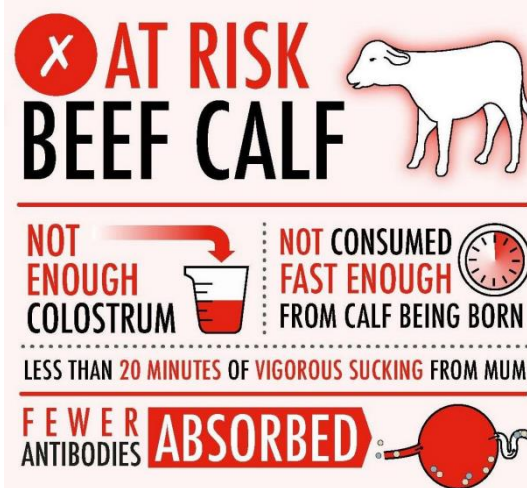


Quantity

- 4 litres of Colostrum or 10% of their bodyweight
- As new-borns are 60% efficient at absorbing antibodies, we need to allow for this when we feed colostrum. By feeding 10% of bodyweight we can still reach our target and provide good energy for new born animals.
- If colostrum on your farm consistently falls below 22% target or there is insufficient volume then speak to us about adjusting dry cow management to promote better colostrum production

Quickly

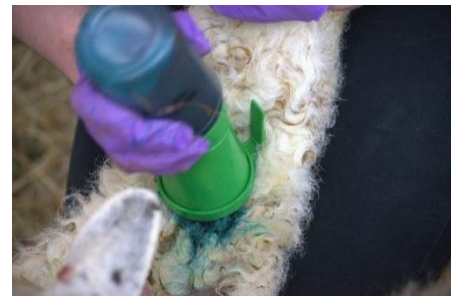
- First feed within 2 hours of birth, legally within 6hrs
- A calf needs to suckle for 20 minutes continuously to get 4 litres colostrum in its first feed
- You can see from the graph that the absorption of antibodies starts to decline rapidly from birth. Milk antibody levels also start to decline from calving as well, so early feeding is vital to protect calves. This means that leaving the colostrum in the cow until ready to feed is not a good idea. As soon as she calves, milk production will dilute down antibodies and the antibodies degrade so harvest and feed as soon as you can within 6 hrs



Newborn calves and lambs fed sufficient colostrum reduce their risk of pneumonia and mortality by over half. It also provides other nutrients, including: vitamins A, D and E which increase the absorptive and digestive capacity of the gut; enzymes and proteins which suppress growth of certain bacteria. Having a simple system that is easy to follow in place means colostrum management will be a success so think about containers, cleaning facilities, fridges and freezers today.

Navel Care

Along with colostrum management we have an update on navel management with a new product for dipping navels. NoBACZ Navel is a liquid solution containing a proprietary blend of shellac and metal salts in an ethanol base. It provides greater desiccation (drying out) of the umbilicus than iodine or chlorhexidine (with or without spirit), and 360° protection by forming a non-colonizable waterproof barrier – protecting the navel from the environment. Uniquely, it also contains a bitter agent making it lick-resistant so that cows or ewes won't interfere and lick it off the navel.



Flock Health Ltd ran a randomized control trial with 6840 lambs (half having their navels and ear-tagging sites doses with strong iodine compared with half dosed with NoBACZ Navel). **NoBACZ navel demonstrated superior protection compared with iodine** in the study¹ with a **21% reduction in mortality** compared with the iodine group. The study also showed a benefit in dipping over spraying, and a clear benefit in applying product to the ear before tagging. However a dirty, contaminated dip cup won't give the same

results so bear this in mind. Whilst this trial was done in sheep the properties of navels won't differ particularly to calves.

Please speak to us if you want to know more information around the options for navel care available.

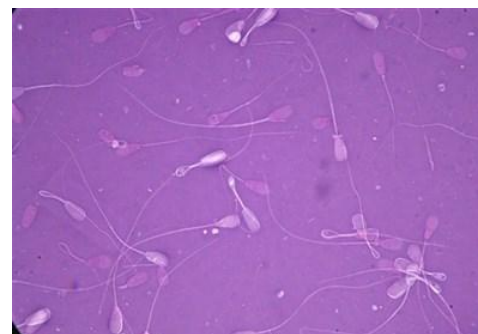
NoBACZ navel is now available to buy from us - call the team to order yours today!

[1] Lovatt, F. (2024). A randomised controlled trial to compare the use of a novel product (NoBACZ Navel) with strong iodine to protect navel and ear tag sites of neonatal lambs (with some additional data on neonatal calves). British Cattle Veterinary Association Congress. October 17- 19, The Celtic Manor Resort, Newport, Wales

IS HE UP TO THE CHALLENGE?

When the beef trade is strong, but overheads are rising, we need to make sure we are getting an efficient return on investment in forages, bedding, time and labour. Whilst we ensure that cows are pregnant before committing to feed and house them in the upcoming year we are not always as strict with breeding males.

UK studies show that 30% of bulls tested were sub-fertile. Bulls need to be able to get 45 out of 50 cows pregnant within a 9-week block in order to earn their place in the breeding herd. When bulls are not fertility tested prior to breeding, performance is unknown until the PD session by which point it is often far too late to rectify without extending the calving block and increasing costs significantly. By performing a bull fertility test 6 to 10 weeks prior to the start of work, we can highlight issues ahead of service. This allows for problems to be rectified or in the worst case scenario for a new bull to be purchased and quarantined ahead of work. A lame bull is also not capable of serving the right number of cows per day so also time for a trim and check round.



Wood Vets Farm Team



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