

# Dairy News

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## Commonly Asked Colostrum & Milk /Milk Replacer Questions

**How much colostrum should a calf receive and how quickly should it be fed?** A calf should receive 4 quarts of good quality colostrum ( $\geq 22\%$  on Brix refractometer) ASAP after birth. Give it within 1-2 hours of birth if possible. If this is not possible then it should be given  $< 6$  hours after birth. The calf's ability to absorb colostrum decreases with every hour after birth. By 24 hours the calf can no longer absorb colostrum.

**Why do bacteria counts on colostrum?** If the bacteria count is high ( $\geq 100,000$ ) on colostrum, the calf will not absorb the colostrum well and will be at increased risk of scours and pneumonia. Calves fed 4 quarts of high quality colostrum ASAP after birth can still get scours and pneumonia if the colostrum is not clean.

**What would cause the colostrum to be high in bacteria counts?** Poor udder prep for colostrum collection, poorly sanitized colostrum collection pails (plastic is harder to sanitize than stainless steel), poorly sanitized or over-used feeding tubes, bottles or nipples are common causes of high bacteria counts.

**What is the difference between a colostrum supplement and a colostrum replacer?** Colostrum supplements are added to colostrum feedings when colostrum quality is poor ( $< 22$  on a Brix refractometer). They have less IgG's (antibodies) than colostrum replacers. Colostrum replacers are used to replace colostrum when colostrum is not available. They may be fed to calves from cows positive for Johnes. The IgG level is much higher in colostrum replacers. They usually have 100-130 IgG.

**There are a lot of colostrum supplements and replacers. Are some better than others?** Lacteal products are better absorbed than serum products. Licensed products with the Center of Veterinary Biologies (CVB) have more control over the manufacture and testing of the product than NonCVB licensed products. When using colostrum replacers, you need to get 150g of IgG. This may require 2 bags of product. If you are uncertain of your colostrum products quality, talk to your veterinarian.

**What temperature should I be mixing and feeding my milk replacer at?** Mix the milk replacer at 120-130°F. Feed your milk or milk replacer at 100-105°F. Use a meat thermometer to test the temperature.

**Why test bacteria counts on milk replacer?** If your milk replacer bacteria count is  $\geq 10,000$ , you will have an increased risk of calf scours and clostridial infections (bloat with sudden death).

**What would cause high bacteria counts in milk replacer?** Poor hygiene of milk replacer powder, dirty or scratched mixing pails, dirty, scratched, or overused calf feed pails, bottles or nipples are common causes of high bacteria counts in milk replacer.

**Why test the total solids of milk or milk replacer?** If milk or milk replacer is low in total solids ( $< 12.5\%$ ), the calves may not be getting the nutrition they need. If the total solid is too high ( $> 15\%$ ) the calves are at increased risk of getting scours and clostridial infection.

- Dr. Scott Wiley

# Dairy Lameness Recommendations

Lameness is one of the largest welfare concerns in cattle and also one of the most costly diseases. Until recently, there was little research data on treating lameness available to practitioners. Recent research indicates that as an industry, in order to “first do no harm,” we may need to re-evaluate how we approach the treatment of lameness in cattle.

What follows are recommendations from the AABP Animal Welfare Committee:

- Foot wraps may slow the healing process by trapping debris, bacteria, and moisture next to the wound. Foot wraps also tend to get tighter when they get wet and can cause further damage or injury to the foot (Shearer, Plummer, Schleining1). Digital dermatitis is the only lesion to consider wrapping, and if applied, all wraps should be removed within three days. Eliminating foot wrapping can not only improve welfare but will also eliminate the cost of materials and labor associated with wrapping feet.
- A treatment paste can be applied to digital dermatitis lesions with a paint brush as an effective alternative to a wrap or bandage (Higginson Cutler et.al2). Dr. Gerard Cramer also presented data at the recent AABP meeting (48th AABP Annual Conference, New Orleans, La.) that showed as low as two grams of tetracycline powder is effective and this lower dose can help minimize the use of antibiotics. He recommends making the paste by using a 3:1 ratio of glycol to water with two grams of tetracycline powder per treatment (*Meat withdrawal 24 hrs. from application, Milk withdrawal 12 hrs. from application, Test for residues before marketing*).
- Any lameness conditions of the sole such as ulcers and white line disease are caused by trauma from inside the claw and any infection is a secondary event. Because of this, there is no benefit from applying topical antibiotics. In fact, research shows that topical treatments such as tetracycline or copper sulfate increase the formation of granulation tissue and delay healing. The best treatment for these sole lesions is to simply trim out the lesion and place a foot block on the healthy claw (Shearer, Plummer, Schleining1).
- The current recommendation is to divert lame cows to a pen close to the parlor. This gives them the best chance to heal by lowering their daily walking distance and allows their progress to be observed (Shearer, Plummer, Schleining1). Any cow treated for horn lesions will benefit from a re-check to ensure that the lesion is healing properly.  
– Dr. Kevin Rockow

## Quote of the month:

Our farmers deserve praise, not condemnation: and their efficiency should be cause for gratitude, not something for which they are penalized"

-President John F. Kennedy



**Mark your Calendars: Jan. 21, 2016 – Client Meeting- 10:00 – 3:00 (lunch provided)**

**Dr. Dave Rhoda – Food Armor Program & Dr. Dick Wallace – Veterinary Feed Directive**

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