

Making Sure Your Calves Get the Good Stuff

Protecting each new-born calf from infectious diseases, ensuring they are healthy and productive in the long term, is a priority for every dairy farmer.

Current research shows that 26-50% of new-born calves don't get enough colostrum, putting them at a much higher risk of disease or early death.

Calf scour and pneumonia pose real threats as soon as the calf is born, but good colostrum management can help give it the right start and protect it into the future.

Antibodies that the dam has built up in her immune system can't pass through the placenta to her calf. But she can pass enough antibodies through her colostrum to her new-born. Not only will this help improve the calf's immune system, it will help ensure its future health and growth.

Guidelines suggest that each calf needs 3-4 litres, or 10% of their bodyweight, of colostrum should be given at birth with a follow feed of a similar size within the first 12 hours. It can get this by suckling or via a stomach tube.

Speed is of the essence though. The calf's ability to absorb the good stuff from the colostrum decreases rapidly after birth. Within 6 hours, it can only absorb 66% of the antibodies and within 24 hours, this reduces to zero.

During peak calving times or an outbreak of calf scour, how can you make sure your new-born calves are getting the best protection?

Making sure your calves get the best start in life is as simple as talking to your vet.

Book a call in to have a chat with us about the best options available. We can help make sure your calving season runs smoothly and is as productive as possible.