

Supplementing Natural Colostrum Helps Prevent Disease

MINNEAPOLIS, MN — An increasing number of dairymen are finding that it pays to supplement the colostrum newborn calves receive from their mothers. Fall weather, with its warm days and cool nights that predisposes calves to disease organisms that cause respiratory problems and scours, makes that payoff even greater.

According to researchers in calf management, the wide swings in temperatures common in the fall place extra stress on newborn

calves and makes their systems more vulnerable to diseases. Therefore it is more important than at any other time of the year for calves to establish a strong passive immunity immediately after birth.

Calves normally receive the ingredients they need to establish passive immunity from the immunoglobulins in first-milk colostrum. However, as a number of dairymen and researchers are discovering, much first-milk colostrum doesn't contain sufficient

immunoglobulins to establish this passive immunity.

Perhaps the most dramatic recent information to surface on the subject of colostrum quality was a University of Florida study. In that study, researchers tested 2,045 first-milk colostrum samples in one commercial herd from 1983 to 1985. The results showed that only 20 percent of the samples contained adequate immunoglobulins.

What can dairymen do to make sure their newborn calves get adequate quality colostrum?

As mentioned before, many dairymen are supplementing the colostrum produced by their cows. Many of these dairymen are using a product called Colostrx® colostrum supplement recently licensed by USDA as the first bovine whey-derived product ever licensed by that agency. Produced by Protein Technology, Inc., in Minneapolis, Minn., Colostrx supplement is made by concentrating the immunoglobulins in cheese whey. The powdered product is designed to be mixed with 1½ quarts of milk and fed to the calf as a one-time feeding within 10 hours

of birth.

Doelman, a Washington dairyman, began using Colostrx supplement shortly after it was licensed in late February. He feeds it to about 10 calves per month in

his 500-cow herd.

"We didn't know what to do," he says, referring to the lack of sufficient quality colostrum uncovered by his testing. "Our cows

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Discovers the last few years of high incidences of inadequate quality colostrum in many dairy cows have prompted an increasing number of dairymen to feed a colostrum supplement to newborn calves. Many are using Colostrx® supplement to help ensure their calves receive adequate levels of immunoglobulins. Making sure calves receive adequate immunoglobins within hours of birth is especially important during rapid temperature changes in fall and spring.

Controlling Arthropods

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insects, it also eliminates the beneficial arthropods. Collison recommended that, where possible, cleaning houses in sections so that there would always be predatory insects around.

Collison also pointed out that the conditions that discourage pest growth are the exact ones that create an environment where the natural pest predators and parasites can flourish.

Chemical controls are often necessary for a successful pest-

control program. The farmer should monitor his pest populations on a regular basis in order to know when to use pesticides, where to apply them, which one to use and how much to use, said Collison. It is important to know where to use insecticides because indiscriminant use of them will destroy predators as well as pests, he added.

Applying a pesticide to the manure ridge crest will kill adult flies without harming predators, many of which live just below the crest.



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