

# Lancaster Dairy Days Provides Strategies For Better Dairying

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Lancaster Farming Staff  
**LANCASTER** (Lancaster Co.) — Lancaster County Extension held two Dairy Day events the past two weeks providing speakers with strong programs for developing strategies for successful dairying.

The first program focused more on disease control while the second program, held Tuesday, mainly featured Dr. Gordon Jones, a Wisconsin veterinarian who has been mostly involved with dairy animals and operations similar to those in Lancaster County.

The main speakers for the first Dairy Day program, held February 27 were Dr. Victor Cortese, a managing technical services veterinarian with Pfizer Inc. who is well known for his expertise in bovine immunology, and Dr. Brian Reed, a local practicing dairy veterinarian with Agricultural Veterinary Associates in Manheim.

The message from Cortese was that dairy herds are all different and while a common theme should form the basis of vaccination programs and disease control, each farm is should have a tailored program, according to the veterinarians speaking at the first of two Lancaster County Dairy Day programs.

The challenge to dairy herd managers then is to develop a program in conjunction with a veterinarian that minimizes the introduction of disease and cost of fighting it, while at the same time protecting the herd.

Cortese explained the function and abilities of the immune system and how viruses and bacteria are recognized and battled by the different blood cells.

In general, Cortese advised feeding fresh colostrum immediately to a calf — a minimum of three quarts at the first feeding and an additional two quarts six to eight hours later.

He said he will use a stomach tube if the calf won't drink enough, but said he likes to stimulate the sucking response.

For those concerned about the volume of colostrum fed, Cortese said that a newborn Holstein calf has a stomach capacity for 2.5 gallons, so three quarts will not cause discomfort.

Further, by using fresh colostrum from an older herd cow, especially one that has been vaccinated and has developed resistance to diseases on the farm, the calf

will get the benefit of the white blood cells in the colostrum, in addition to the antibodies.

He said studies have shown that the white blood cells in colostrum help regulate and enhance the calf's immune defense mechanism, giving it the best chance at survival.

The first thing Cortese said he suspects in cases of early scours in calves is a lack of good colostrum feeding.

The primary colostrum should

be fresh, with refrigerated fresh second choice. He said it will keep for up to seven days refrigerated.

Freezing colostrum kills the white blood cells that give the calf so much benefit, he said. The antibodies survive freezing, but the white blood cells are very important in protecting the calf.

The reason he advised using colostrum from one of the older cows in the herd, rather than first-calf heifers, is because the older cows should have developed white

blood cells and antibodies against existing herd diseases that the heifer may not have developed yet.

(This is especially true for those bringing springing heifers onto the farm, a practice he advised against if possible.)

He also advised against freezing the colostrum and heating it in a microwave because it destroys many of the beneficial aspects of colostrum.

He advised heating the refrigerator (Turn to Page A30)

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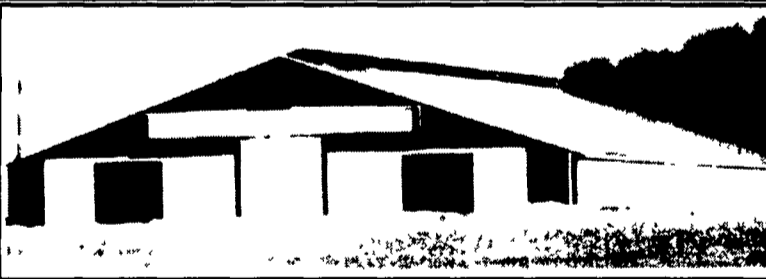
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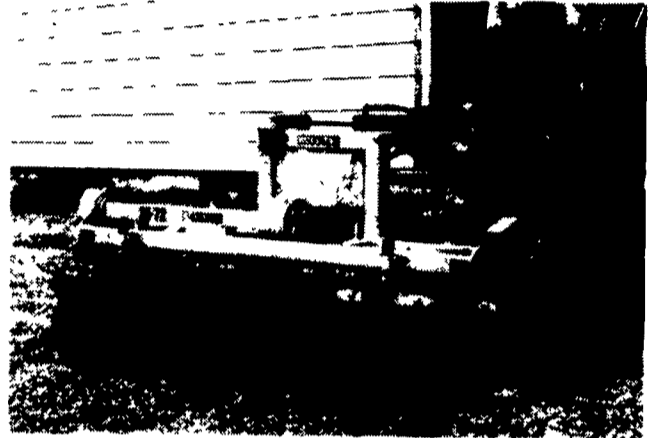
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