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Clinic Hours: Mon-Fri 7am – 5pm Sat 7am – 12pm

Hwy 89 Clinic: Mon-Sat 7am-1 pm

Orders for Delivery: **call by 9:30am at the latest** for same day local delivery Monday to Friday

24 Hour Emergency Vet Service

FEBRUARY 2012 NEWSLETTER

Clinic News

Thanks to all who came out to Dr. Sam Leadley's Dairy presentations in Mount Forest and Linwood in January. His presentations focusing on calf health were very informative and your attendance made it a success!

Clinic Repairs

In February we will be completing some needed repairs and upgrades at the Linwood clinic. Please use the set of front doors on the far right, where Liz and Emily will be camped out for the duration. There will be no change of hours or services.

Delivery Charges

As of Feb 1, 2012 orders for delivery totaling less than \$100 before tax, will pay a \$10 freight charge, and orders between \$100 and under \$200 will continue to have a \$5 freight charge. Linwood will continue to deliver orders over \$200 before tax, without freight charges.

Returns Policy

Linwood Veterinary Services and Hwy 89 Veterinary services cannot accept returns of vaccines or special order items. Returns of other products with satisfactory expiry dates and conditions will be accepted and a 10% restocking fee on the returned items will be applied to your account.

Johne's Education and Management Assistance Program

To find out when your area is coming up on the program schedule visit www.johnes.ca

Nicole Perkins is the Johne's program co-ordinator. Contact her at 226-979-1664 or johnes@uoguelph.ca for further information about the program.

Colostrum: What makes it critical to the calf?

Special thanks to Dr. Sam Leadley for providing a comprehensive review of early calf care at the Mount Forest and Linwood dairy sessions. He wished to pass on a link to his free monthly newsletter in which many aspects of calf and heifer raising are discussed. Please go to www.atticacows.com.

All producers recognize the importance of colostrum in helping calves get off to a healthy start. The antibodies a calf gets through colostrum are all it will have to fight off infectious diseases during the first weeks of life. Calves which do not get enough colostrum are six times more likely to get sick during the first weeks of life compared to calves that got enough colostrum.

The colostrum's ability to help the calf have to do with both cow and calf factors.

Cow factors which affect the quality and quantity of colostrum are:

- Cow body condition (cows with body condition scores of 5 or 6 produce better colostrum than poorer-condition cows).
- Cow antibody level (which can be boosted by scours vaccination late in gestation).
- breed of cow (beef breeds generally have higher concentrations of antibodies compared to dairy breeds—some studies show as much as 2 or 3 times higher).

Factors that affect a calf's ability to drink colostrum and absorb the antibodies from it:

1. The calf needs to get colostrum IMMEDIATELY. A calf's ability to absorb colostrum antibodies starts to decline as soon as it is born. This **IS** the most important factor of all. After 24 hours of life, a calf is no longer able to get the benefit of the antibodies in colostrum. What this means is that a calf will get a lot more antibodies from colostrum when it's fed earlier than later. Ideally, one would like to see calves get their required amount at 2-3 hours of age, then again 6-8 hours after that.
2. How much colostrum should a calf get? A common rule is that a calf should get a minimum of 100 grams of total antibody through colostrum. But what does that mean? It really depends on the concentration of antibodies in the colostrum, and we know that this can vary greatly between breeds and even between individual cows. If one uses Holstein colostrum with 30 grams of antibody per liter, then a bit over 3 quarts will get the job done. But beef cow colostrum might contain 100 grams in a liter, meaning 1 quart might do it. But it might contain a lot less, too. It's hard to tell unless each dose of colostrum is analyzed using a Refractometer (**The clinic has this equipment to help you assess the quality of sample colostrum.**)

Providing 10% of body weight of colostrum during the first and again at the second feeding of life is a common rule of thumb. Feeding more than this to a viable calf will not hurt.
3. Calf temperature stress. Chilled calves do not absorb antibodies from colostrum as readily as calves that are not chilled. The same is true of heat stress. Calves should be protected from temperature extremes. The nutrients in colostrum significantly improve a chilled calf's ability to maintain normal body temperature, so it is not wise to delay administering colostrum too long. Cold stress does not affect the length of the "absorption window" significantly one way or the other.
4. Colostrum temperature at feeding. Very important to provide colostrum at normal body temperature since absorption of antibody decreases as the temperature of the colostrum decreases.
5. Other factors. Stress from a difficult calving or lack of mothering from the cow have both been shown to decrease the efficiency of colostrum absorption in calves.

List of supplies and equipment for calving time

For Assisting Deliveries:

- Bucket (stainless steel or heavy plastic/rubber) for water
- Warm water
- Disinfectant for equipment, cow-friendly
- Antiseptic soap (surgical scrub like, betadine)
- OB sleeves
- OB lubricant
- OB chains – better than straps or ropes for cleanliness
- OB handles
- Calf puller in good repair
- Head snare

For Getting the Calf Going:

- Old towels -- for cleanup and for rubbing calf after delivery
- Disinfectant for navel (iodine, etc. – on recommendation from vet)
- New syringes & needles for medication
- Tubing bag/esophageal feeder – one that can be thoroughly cleaned between calves
- Colostrum replacer (not colostrum supplement -- for emergencies when the real stuff is not available)
- Wire whisk – makes mixing powder easy; thoroughly clean after use.

For Treating New Born Calves:

- Bottles/nipples or tubing bag/esophageal feeder – thoroughly clean after each use
- Milk replacer
- Syringes/needles for medication
- Medications/preventatives as outlined by your veterinarian (such as antitoxins, antibiotics, vitamin injections, etc.)
- Electrolyte powder for scouring calves
- Wire whisk
- Ear tags, applicators and markers
- Elastrator bands