

Feeding colostrum in six steps



- 1 Milk your cow directly after birth and inspect the colostrum**
- Milk your cow directly after birth, using a mini-milker for instance.
 - Make sure colostrum is clean by ensuring optimal hygiene during milking
 - Test the colostrum and feed the calf 4 litres.
 - Do not administer colostrum with flakes or colostrum from cows being treated with antibiotics.
 - If the quality of the colostrum is

- 2 Test quality**
- Test the colostrum quality with a refractometer to determine antibody levels. Visit www.sprayfo.com for an instruction video on testing colostrum quality.
 - If Brix value is 22 or higher, feed the colostrum to the calf.
 - If Brix value is 19, 20 or 21, consider adding Sprayfo Colostrum to increase immunoglobulin level.
 - If Brix value is 18 or lower, do not use the colostrum from that dam.

- 3 Supply 4 litres of colostrum within 1 hour**
- Feed 4 litres of colostrum within 1 hour after birth. This may be colostrum from the dam, colostrum from another cow on the farm, frozen colostrum or a colostrum replacer.
 - Healthy calves drink 3–4 litres of colostrum without a problem. This colostrum will reach the small intestines where the antibodies are absorbed directly.
 - Colostrum temperature must be around 40°C, as close as possible to the calf's body temperature.

- 4 Feed the colostrum using a teat bottle**
- Preferably use a teat bottle to administer the colostrum. The best way to do this is:
- Stand over the calf and hold its head between your knees. This works particularly well with lively calves.
 - Offer the teat bottle and allow the calf to drink.
 - Use the dosing valve to supply additional air, as this helps the calf to suckle more easily.

- 5 Freeze remaining colostrum for reserve**
- Colostrum must be frozen at a temperature of -18°C and the temperature must be kept constant.
 - Place a digital thermometer in your freezer and check the temperature at regular intervals.
 - Colostrum is best frozen in containers that are as flat as possible allowing the colostrum to thaw quickly.
 - Record the number of the cow and the date the colostrum was collected on the container.
 - Frozen colostrum can be kept for up to two years.

- 6 2nd Colostrum batch**
- Milk the cow again 6-12 hours after parturition for a second batch of colostrum.
 - Go to www.sprayfo.com for a schedule for days 2 and 3.

! Weak calf?

If the calf is weak, use a feeding tube. Especially for weak calves, 4 litres of colostrum is of vital importance and provides a much better start. When using a feeding tube, the colostrum enters the abomasum directly.

Correct use of a feeding tube:

- Place your finger in the calf's mouth to trigger a suckling reflex. Place the tube in the mouth. Take care to insert the tube correctly, by checking the distance between the calf's nose and point of the shoulder and compare this distance with the length of the feeding tube.
- Make sure the tube enters the rumen and not the lungs.
- Check that the tube is in the oesophagus by palpating the neck (adjacent to the trachea).
- Pour the colostrum down the tube.
- Gently remove the tube.