



From the desk of Dr. Jarrett Gordon

May 1, 2018

Since winter hasn't lost its grip yet, we are seeing lingering calf health issues. The struggle with thick hair coats and the occasional 60-degree days make pneumonia and scours especially tough. The environmental buildup never got reduced by consistent cold temps this winter. So, if you're experiencing more problems than usual, you are not alone. We need to remember the 4 C's, especially when challenged with weather extremes.

1. Colostrum

First, colostrum is the primary protection against diseases of any type. More and more research supports feeding high volumes of colostrum. Holstein calves can easily handle a gallon within the first 3-6 hours of life, followed by another half gallon within 6 hours after the initial feeding. We can monitor how well your workers are doing by measuring total protein on your calves at 3 days old. The new gold standard is 6.0 mg/dl. This is up from the old goal of 5.5. We find very few samples that are in the proper range. Other factors related to colostrum are bacterial load in the colostrum itself due to dirty collection and storage equipment and **timing** of feeding the colostrum to the calf. Make sure your collection system is properly disinfected including all tubing. Strive to get colostrum into the calf before it is 6 to 12 hours old. The calf's ability to absorb immunoglobulins out of the colostrum declines to zero by 24 hours old. If you are storing fresh colostrum longer than 48 hours, you can use potassium sorbate preservative to extend the shelf life as long as it is properly cooled prior to adding the preservative. If you freeze colostrum, you need to thaw it slowly and avoid high temp thaw water. Don't use water above 140 degrees F as this will denature the colostrum proteins.

2. Calories

Next is calories. We continue to see farms feeding two quarts twice a day of 20:20 milk replacer. This is a starvation diet for calves. Strive for a minimum of two quarts three times a day, or three quarts two times a day of 13.5% solids milk/milk replacer. For most of the on-milk period, calves will consume a gallon twice a day easily. Then do a step-down weaning process where you gradually decrease the milk volume to promote starter intake in the last two weeks before weaning. Providing fresh warm water after milk will also drive starter intake.

3. Comfort

Then consider comfort. This involves square feet of space per animal and environmental quality at the level of the calf. Humidity and drafts need to be minimized. We constantly see pens of overcrowded, wet calves that just can't get warm and dry. Ventilation tubes can help only so much if we are putting the

calves under too much challenge from environmental stress. The greatest "medicine" you can give your calves is space and straw! Thick bedding where they can nest down in for warmth is absolutely crucial. 30 ft²/calf minimum.

4. Cleanliness

Finally, cleanliness is the final step. This is tied closely with comfort but goes a step further. Clean, dry bedding is the number one **"treatment"** you can give your calves. Clean, dry air entering their "space" is a close second. Be aware of humidity changes especially at dawn/dusk in your barns. You can get thermometers that measure relative humidity along with temperature inside your pens that are very helpful to "chart" the 24-hour fluctuations. Use this information to make fan adjustments, add ventilation tubes, or open curtains as needed. Adding drainage may be necessary, or just more frequent additions of new bedding, to keep your calves clean and dry. Smaller group pens might be the answer, too.

Keep looking UP. Spring is God's promise of new life. Even if it doesn't look like it yet, the sun will shine, and the grass will turn green!

Drop Ship

Unfortunately, our list of backordered items does not seem to be getting any smaller. We would like to thank everyone for their patience, and we will continue to ship products as soon as they become available. Also, please keep in mind our drop ship policy:

1. A doctor client relationship must be established and maintained.
2. Your service and drop ship account must be paid in full each month. If your account is past due, orders will be placed on hold until a payment is received.

Upcoming Meetings

Caring For Your Aging Horse

Tuesday, May 22, 2018 at 6 PM

For more information, visit www.thumbvets.com or call (810) 648-8230.

Please RSVP by phone or email chelseam@thumbvets.com

Calving Tips and Practice

Wednesday, June 20, 2018 at 5 PM

Cost: \$45 per attendee

Please RSVP by phone or email katied@thumbvets.com

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