

Beef and Lamb Colostrum Feeding

Josh Onyango, Livestock Health Consultant, Published on 11 August 2017

Why feeding colostrum is so important

- No transfer of maternal antibodies across the placenta to the developing foetus in ruminants so lambs/calves are born without protection against disease.
- Research has found up to 50 per cent of total lambing losses occurred in the first 48 hours after birth are due to poor colostrum absorption/intake (figure 1).

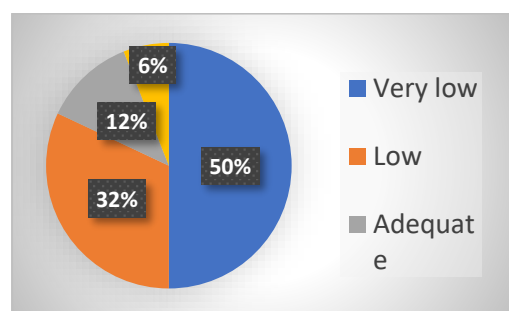


Fig 1

Figure 2 illustrate the nutritive benefits of feeding colostrum in comparison to whole milk.

Typical analysis	Wole milk	Colostrum
Total solids %	12.5	23.9
Fat %	3.6	6.7
Protein	3.2	14
Immunoglobulins %	0.09	6.0
IgG1 (G/100mls)	0.06	3.2

Fig 2

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The 4Qs of colostrum management

Quickly

Ideally, as soon as possible after birth and at latest within 6 hours.

Quantity

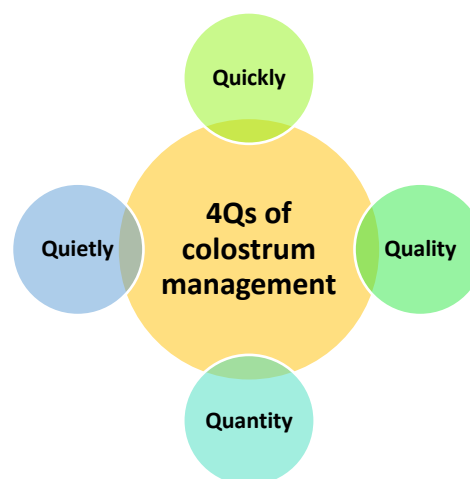
Minimum of 3 litres or 10% body weight for calves in the first 6 hrs, split into 2 feeding if necessary. Approximately 210 mls/kg bodyweight for lambs in the first 24hrs.

Quality

Ensure there are sufficient antibodies (against diseases)

Quietly

Minimise stress for maximum absorption of antibodies.



Benefits of feeding colostrum

- Provide passive immunity
- Increase feeding efficiency
- Reduce mortality

References: Quigley, J. (2002). Passive Immunity in Newburn Calves