

Colostrum Management

3 Qs: Quantity:

10% bodyweight within 6 hours e.g. 3-4 litres

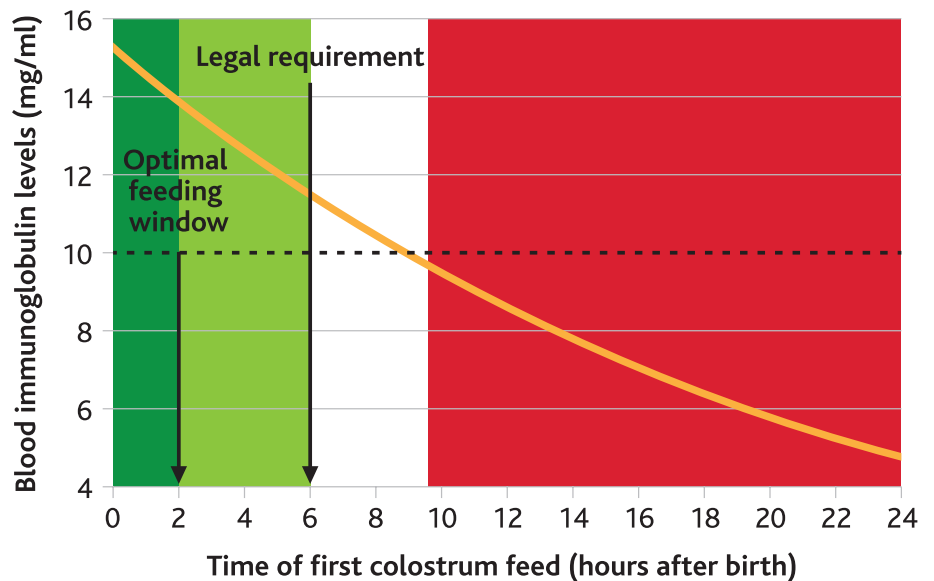
3 Qs: Quality:

Use a colostrometer or refractometer to check quality. Must contain >50g/L IgG. Freeze good quality colostrum from Johnes-free cows for future use.

3 Qs: Quickly:

Try to feed calves ASAP.

Milk out the cow promptly after calving as quality declines the longer the colostrum remains in the udder. Immediately after birth, calves have a good ability to absorb antibodies into their blood but this declines quickly (see graph).



Calves left to suckle their dam are 2.4 times more likely to receive insufficient antibodies.

Method: Use of a bottle promoting the natural suckling process means that the colostrum is deposited into the true stomach. If the calf will not take the full volume by bottle then use of a stomach tube is advised but is a skilled technique which must only be attempted by trained staff.

Use separate equipment for newborn calves and sick calves.

Calves 24hrs - 7 days of age can be blood sampled to monitor colostrum intake. This is undertaken at the practice and can quickly reveal problems with colostrum feeding.

Ensure stringent cleanliness and hygiene.