

NEWBORN HEALTH: Preventing calfhood infections

Preventing infection costs much less than treating disease. We all know this. But it's hard to put into practice. What can we do to prevent calfhood infections?

Well bedded dry cow facilities are profitable.

Close up cows are cleaner when we move them to pre-fresh or calving housing. Their coats are less matted and udders are cleaner.

If a birth is unattended calves are much less likely to get a mouth full of manure before their first swallow of colostrum.

Well bedded calving facilities are profitable.

The cows are cleaner at calving. Especially important, calves rest on clean, dry bedding as they are born.

Severe pathogen exposure at birth from dirty calving facilities often is an impossible challenge to overcome even with superior colostrum feeding practices.

Prompt milking of fresh dams is profitable.

The amount of antibodies to be harvested in the colostrum is fixed at calving. Colostrum collected at six hours post calving compared to two hours had 17% fewer antibodies. At ten and 14 hours post-calving the losses are 27% and 33% respectively, compared with two hours post calving. **Prompt milking post-calving gives you higher antibody colostrum.**

Prompt colostrum feeding is profitable.

In the first six hours after birth, a calf's ability to absorb antibodies from her first colostrum feeding halves. At 12 hours post calving, the antibody absorption rate is down to only one-quarter of what it was when the calf was born. Early colostrum feeding gets a larger number of antibodies into a calf's bloodstream than delayed

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feeding. Antibodies equal immunity. Calves with greater immunity are healthier overall. They have fewer infectious diseases and require fewer treatments.

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