

What-if situations: Can colostrum replacers help?

How to help customers get newborn calves started right

Much like depending on the weather forecast to provide us with accurate weather predictions, we can't always rely on fresh cows to give us the quality colostrum calves need. Or for employees to properly collect and manage colostrum before it gets to the newborn calf's mouth.

Quality colostrum is the key to achieving successful passive transfer in newborn calves. But what if colostrum doesn't test well enough? What if there isn't enough? What if it can't be fed soon enough? What if disease transmission is a concern?

There are so many what-ifs. The list could go on. Bottom line, helping your customers prepare for those what-if situations by having a colostrum replacer on hand will ensure newborn calves get off to a great start.

"We can't underestimate how hard maternal colostrum is to manage right. That's important to keep in mind as you talk to calf raisers," says Sara Sievert, director of commercial business development at Milk Products. "Sometimes feeding a colostrum replacer is just more convenient and best for everyone involved. Colostrum replacers derived from maternal colostrum provide IgG at levels comparable to quality colostrum, as well as protein, vitamins and minerals newborn calves need."

Quality colostrum replacers are convenient and provide consistent:

Quality – The same amount of IgGs are in every package.

Quantity – Contains the correct volume to feed a newborn calf.

Quickness – Colostrum should be delivered within the first two hours of life. Feeding a colostrum replacer is simple: open the package, mix and feed calf.

Cleanliness – Sanitary packaging, immediate mixing and feeding reduces the potential for bacterial contamination.

Biosecurity – Reduces transmission of diseases, like Johne's, BLV, Mycoplasma, Salmonella and Cryptosporidium.

With many colostrum replacer options available, it can be hard to know which one is the best fit for your customers' needs.

Keep in mind the following tips:

Explain why the numbers count. For calves to achieve successful passive transfer, industry recommendations are to feed 150-200 grams of IgG at first feeding.¹

Evaluate cost per IgG. When comparing colostrum replacers, look at cost per IgG. Try not to focus only on the price per package. Looking at cost per gram of IgG will help customers evaluate the cost on a quality basis.

Mixability matters. Colostrum replacers and supplements have historically earned a bad rap for not mixing well. Powder clumps would stick to the inside of the calf bottle, nipple or tube feeder. As a result, calves may consume less of the intended IgGs, reducing absorption and compromising passive transfer. To optimize product effectiveness, Milk Products uses instantized ingredients to make colostrum products that dissolve faster and mix easier.

[Read more](#) about colostrum replacers.

¹Dairy Calf and Heifer Association Gold Standards.