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FARMER GUIDE

Colostrum

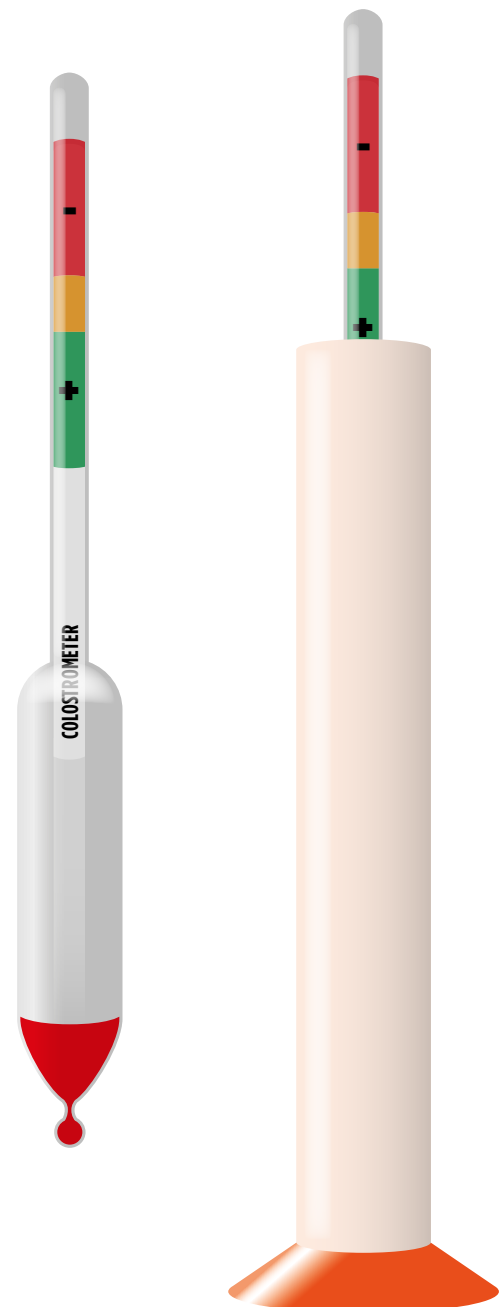
Quality

To boost calf health and performance it is essential to feed the right amount of top quality colostrum at the right time.

Many cows within a herd will produce poor quality colostrum. Traditionally, colostrum from heifers has been discarded. However, with well managed feeding and vaccination programmes heifers are now capable of producing good quality colostrum – so check it for quality first.

Checking

It's no good just looking at colostrum – even if it looks thick and creamy it may be sub-standard. A **colostrometer** will give you a quick, simple assessment of quality.

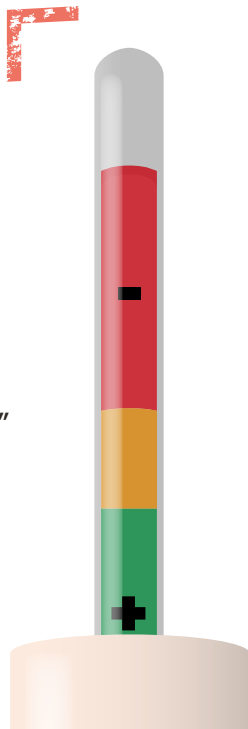




Using a colostrometer

- Place the test sample of colostrum in a clean cylinder
- Allow it to cool to room temperature (20–22°C) for accuracy. If too warm, the colostrometer may underestimate the antibody quality
- Keep froth to a minimum – too much will make the scale hard to read
- Float the colostrometer in the colostrum
- If the colostrometer floats in the **green** section, the quality is **GOOD**; **this should be fed to the newborn calf as soon as possible (ideally within 2 hours)**, or it can be stored
- If the colostrometer floats in the **orange** section, the quality is **AVERAGE**; **this should not be fed to the newborn calf (1st 24 hours) but is fine for 2–3 day olds which have already consumed good quality colostrum**
- If the colostrometer floats in the **red** section, the quality is **POOR** and **should be discarded or fed to older animals**
- GOOD quality colostrum can be stored in the fridge for up to **7 days** and in the freezer for up to **1 year**
- Refrigerate or freeze within 1–2 hours of collection; left at room temperature bacteria will double every 20–30 minutes

Colostrometer floating high in **green** section indicates “good” quality



Colostrometer floating low in **red** section indicates “poor” quality

