Of Colostrum & Calves...

In this time of SARS and viral assaults on our health, true first-milking colostrum is a super food. And we think that Anovite is the best first-milking colostrum available today.

Complete first milking bovine colostrum can promote the development of a sound body mass and support the activation and maintenance of a fully functional immune system. A healthy immune system is capable of efficiently and effectively managing potential insults from microorganisms and other harmful sources. Most individuals beginning colostrum supplementation report increased energy and many other secondary benefits, like smoother skin. Bovine colostrum is also beneficial to almost any animal species and can readily offer its full benefits to humans through routine dietary supplementation.

But consumers often ask whether the gathering of colostrum is a humane process. We spoke with Anthony Kleinsmith, Ph.D., founder of Anovite, in Lehi, Utah, producer of the nation’s leading first-milking colostrum.

**HL** Is it important to collect the colostrum right after birth?

**AK** Absolutely. It is very important to recognize that if colostrum is not removed from the mammary gland within six to eight hours after birth, the mother will begin to reabsorb many of the biologically active substances back into her system, including the hormones and immunoglobulins. Therefore, the composition of the fluid in the mammary gland changes rapidly during the hours and days after birth (even if no fluid is removed) so that there is a continuous transition from complete colostrum to whole milk.

**HL** Why do some manufacturers use “colostrum” collected up to 72 hours after birth of the calf?

**AK** True colostrum must be obtained in the first milking taken during the six to eight hours after birth of the calf.

Apparently, the scientific facts have not reached every manufacturer of colostrum products since some of them still market ‘colostrum’ that is collected from multiple milkings after the birth of the calf. This obviously results in much more product per cow, but the resulting colostrum powders are deficient in many of the most beneficial components and the remaining constituents have been significantly diluted. Thus, they will never provide the same range of benefits that would be realized with high quality first milking colostrum.

**HL** Does the calf get the colostrum that it needs?

**AK** Everyone who uses colostrum worries that the dairy farmer collects as much colostrum as he can and then sells it all without giving any to the calf. First, we have to understand that the calf in question is valuable to the dairy farmer as a replacement or expansion animal in his herd. This means that he is going to do everything that he can to help that calf survive and develop into a healthy, producing animal. In fact, modern dairy farmers in the United States recognize that allowing the calf to suckle its mother usually results in the calf receiving less colostrum than it needs. The average amount of colostrum that can be collected from a mature Holstein dairy cow in the first milking (within the first six to eight hours after birthing) is approximately 10 liters (9.5 quarts). Numerous scientific studies have shown that a calf must receive about two quarts of colostrum within six hours after it is born to minimize its risk of disease and support its development as a healthy and productive animal. At least this amount is usually hand-fed to the calf in a nursing bottle.

Many years ago, U.S. dairy farmers dairy cows, including breeding and unsupervised calf delivery in the pasture environment, could actually cause several serious problems. It led to a higher incidence of disease, negatively affected milk production volumes and the quality of milk, and had an adverse effect of the health of the calves, because there was no way to assure they received an adequate amount of colostrum. It has become a dairy industry standard in the United States that all pregnant cows due to deliver, are monitored around the clock. Most dairy farms have a maternity ward away from the main herd for this purpose. This system, as opposed to dropping calves in the open pasture, prevents disease, facilitates better calf handling and allows for quicker, cleaner collection of colostrum.

Another consideration in regard to the dairy herd is that not every mother cow provides high quality colostrum. Studies show that only those cows that have experienced three or more live births produce colostrum with a maximum amount of bioactive substances and a sufficient quantity and diversity of antibodies to be considered high quality. So as dairy farmers we are always sure that our calves receive ample amounts of colostrum. They’re very valuable to us, both as living sentient creature and as our future.