

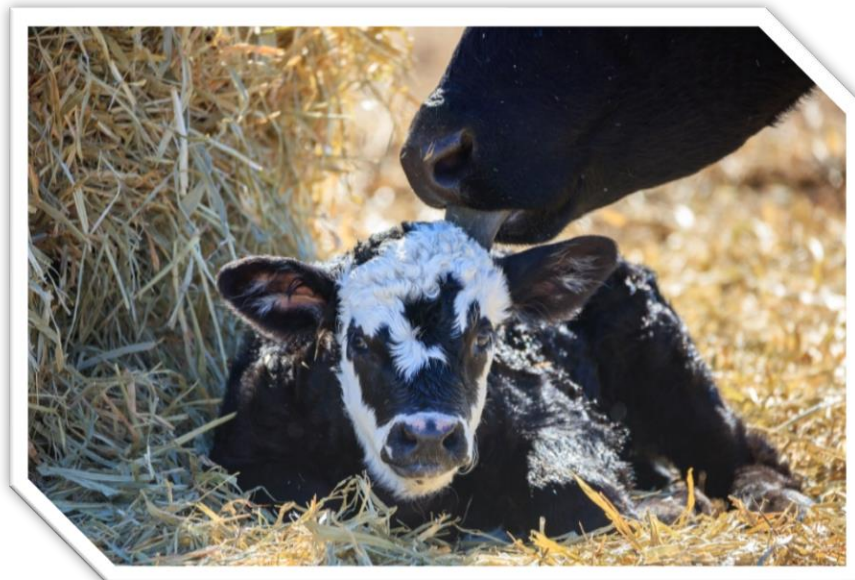


Fiji DAIRYNOTE 1.1 - Calf and Heifer Rearing - Newborn Calves

Good Practice Guide for Fiji Dairy Farmers

Newborn calves

- Remove the calf from the cow as soon as possible after birth, to ensure the calf gets a known amount of colostrum.
 - Where TB is present in a herd, feeding heat-treated (pasteurised) colostrum means TB won't be transferred to new calves.
- Make sure that the calf's nose is clear of all membranes and that it is breathing properly.



A newborn calf being cleaned by its mother.

If the calf isn't breathing properly, rub the sides down with a cloth or handful of grass.



- Treat the calf's navel with iodine solution. Use a navel clip (pictured above right) to prevent bleeding and bugs getting in. Full coverage of the navel cord is needed.
- Spray the navel from the tip to the base where it connects to the belly; 7% iodine is best as it helps dry the navel (teat spray stays wet longer so is not as good).





Fiji DAIRYNOTE 1.1: Calf and Heifer Rearing – Newborn Calves

The first feed

- Feed the calf with at least 4 litres of good 'gold' colostrum within 6 hours of birth.
- Feed colostrum for the first 4 days – that's 2 litres twice a day (4 litres per day total).
- Getting new calves to drink takes patience and is easier if they have not yet suckled from the mother. Feeding from teats is easier than buckets as the calf can 'suckle' naturally.
- Ensure teats on calf feeders are clean, not cracked or split (where bugs can hide).
- Tag and record your newborn calf and its weight at birth (use a weighband or scales).



GOLD COLOSTRUM

The first 'milk' from a freshly calved cow has high levels of immunoglobulins. This provides the calf with improved disease resistance and is also highly nutritious having 4x the protein and 2x the fat of normal milk.

Colostrum

So what's the fuss with colostrum?

Colostrum is referred to as 'gold' due to not only its colour (yellow), but also because it has so many good attributes for the newborn calf. The magic ingredient is called IgG for short and measures the number of immunoglobulins present. These provide the calf with improved immunity from disease and research has shown that calves that get sufficient colostrum high in IgG in the 24 hours after birth have improved growth rates, disease resistance and even produce more milk once lactating. IgG can only be absorbed through the gut wall in the first 24 hours and the rate at which it is absorbed decreases over this time.

Percent of IgG absorbed over time

