Beef and Lamb Colostrum Feeding
Josh Onyango, Livestock Health Consultant, Published on 11 August 2017

Why feeding colostrum is so important

- No transfer of maternal antibodies across the placenta to the developing foetus in ruminants so lambs/calves are born without protection against disease.
- Research has found up to 50 per cent of total lambing losses occurred in the first 48 hours after birth are due to poor colostrum absorption/intake (figure 1).

Fig 1

Figure 2 illustrate the nutritive benefits of feeding colostrum in comparison to whole milk.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typical analysis</th>
<th>Wole milk</th>
<th>Colostrum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total solids %</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>23.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fat %</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protein</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immunoglobulins %</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IgG1 (G/100mls)</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more information on this article, please contact Josh Onyango, Livestock Health Consultant
E: josho@i4agrri.org.

For general information, please contact Innovation for Agriculture, Arthur Rank Centre, Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire, CV32LZ, E: info@i4agrri.org, T: 02476692470
W: http://www.innovationforagriculture.org.uk/

The 4Qs of colostrum management

Quickly

Ideally, as soon as possible after birth and at latest within 6 hours.

Quantity

Minimum of 3 litres or 10% body weight for calves in the first 6 hrs, split into 2 feeding if necessary. Approximately 210 mls/kg bodyweight for lambs in the first 24hrs.

Quality

Ensure there are sufficient antibodies (against diseases)

Quietly

Minimise stress for maximum absorption of antibodies.

Benefits of feeding colostrum

- Provide passive immunity
- Increase feeding efficiency
- Reduce mortality