Moos News

March 2026

"Producers and veterinarians can agree that a strong relationship is critical for success in animal health and when done right, can be rewarding for all involved."



Milverton-Wellesley Veterinary Services

93 Main Street North
Telephone: 519-595-4911
Email: info@mwvets.com

Colostrum Management
Factors Affecting Yield and Quality



From The Desk Of
Dr. Jeff Sommer

By now, everyone is well aware of the importance of feeding good quality, clean colostrum as soon as possible after birth of calves, and likely the consequences of poor or failed passive transfer of antibodies to the newborn calf such as preweaning scours, pneumonia and poor growth. But what factors are involved when that colostrum isn't high quality, or there is not enough volume to feed the calf to get successful passive transfer of immunity. I think most of us agree that this is a frustrating and poorly understood issue. Hopefully this newsletter will shed a bit more light on the subject and perhaps a few take home messages to help improve the situation on your farm.

Colostrogenesis is a process that begins well before the cow actually calves, in fact typically up to 4 weeks prior to a calf being born. It should come as no surprise then, that there are a number of cow and dry cow management factors that influence both the colostrum supply and quality. Here are a number of the trends shown in current research:

- Colostrum quantity is highest in the summer in relation to photoperiod, but declines in fall and winter before starting to increase again in the spring. Quality as measured by IgG levels, had the opposite trend, being somewhat higher in the fall and winter and lower in the spring and summer
- Individual variation is another factor, with higher parity cows showing both better yields and higher Brix levels indicating higher IgG levels
- Heifer calves were associated with lower colostrum yields in both first calf heifers and mature cows, and better yields for male calves or twins
- Stillborn calves were associated with reduced yields from mature cows
- Inadequate dry period length showed a significant decrease in colostrum yield and Brix %, with cows managed for a 60-day dry period resulted in 2.2 plus or minus 0.4 kg more colostrum compared with a 40 day dry period
- Heat stress also decreased both colostrum yield and quality (IgG levels) compared to cooled cows
- Increasing energy density above recommended levels did increase colostrum yield but was shown to decrease quality
- Metabolizable protein levels did not appear to influence colostrum quantity or quality
- Other close up nutritional strategies such as DCAD diets or X Zelit did not affect yield or quality
- Vit D may have a potential yield response but had mixed results on quality
- Choline supplementation also showed inconsistent response
- Colostrum harvest was also an important factor with the highest IgG or quality occurring if harvest within the first 9 hours after calving
- The use of intramuscular oxytocin was shown to increase yield, in first calf heifers in particular without much affect in mature cows, and had very little impact on quality



MW VETS PRODUCER MEETING

March 12, 2026

10:00 AM-3:00 PM

Perth East Recreation Complex

40 Temperance St. Milverton, ON N0K 1M0

Come join us for coffee, snacks & a hot lunch!

Guest speaker Dave Renaud

↳ **Why do some calves thrive and others die? Early life decisions that shape health, growth, and survival.**



Milverton-Wellesley Vet team

↳ **Calf Health Program**



Door Prizes!

RSVP by March 9th 2026

CALL: 519-595-4911 • TEXT: 833-676-4112 • EMAIL: info@mwvets.com