



Colostrum Replacements & Assessing Passive Transfer

To assess how well passive transfer is being accomplished, we can test the calf's total protein (a simple blood sample tested at the clinic). The goal for total protein is 5.5g/dL or greater on a calf that is 2-7 days old. To achieve this goal a calf needs the appropriate volume (4 quarts), in a timely fashion (within 4 hours of birth), and a colostrum or colostrums replacement product with an IgG level of ≥ 150 g minimum. Colostrum can be tested with a colostrometer to roughly assess the level of IgG.

In regards to colostrums replacement products, they usually will state the amount of IgG on the bag. Unfortunately, most on the market are less than 150g. Therefore, if you use a colostrum replacement product, we at Waunakee Vet Service recommend using 1.5 to 2 bags depending on the choice of product. A possible alternative would be using a colostrum replacement AND a colostrum supplement to attain ≥ 150 g of IgG. Ask your herd veterinarian for more details about IgG levels fed to your calves and how to implement testing total proteins into your calf raising programs.