

Dr. Nick's Colostrum Warmer: Feeding clean, high-quality colostrum, in a timely manner is the foundation to a successful calf program. Having a plan in place for collecting good quality colostrum and keeping it frozen as a fallback when cows freshen with poor colostrum is an accepted practice. However, thawing the colostrum can be a stumbling block: it's slow and takes time. When it comes to warming colostrum, we need to be mindful of temperature. If it's too cold (< 100°F) the calf will have to expend energy to warm up the colostrum, slowing digestion and absorption of antibodies. If too hot (> 140°F) we risk denaturing (ruining) the antibodies that are needed to transfer mom's immunity. The ideal feeding temperature for colostrum is **105°F**. To solve this conundrum Dr. Nick has built a simple and inexpensive colostrum warmer (pictured above) with detailed construction directions available at the clinic or on our web site. We also have the demo model pictured available for purchase. If you would like more details, talk to Nick.



DIY COLOSTRUM WARMER

This colostrum warmer is available for purchase at WVS

With the addition of Dr. Nick to our practice and his passion for raising great calves there is going to be more emphasis in the newsletter focused on growing youngstock. I stole the following Plus-Minus discussion about hay feeding to calves from some magazine and Nick liked it. Calves fed pelleted starter formulations may benefit from the buffering effect of forage. Some pelleted starters have high levels of readily fermentable starch, which can cause ruminal acidosis. This is especially true when calves eat large quantities of 8 or more pounds of starter per day.

The pros to forage feeding:

- Forage feeding can provide physical abrasiveness that prevents keratin build-up on rumen papillae. This makes the rumen more functional and capable of greater nutrient absorption. However, the same effect can be achieved by feeding texturized starter grain, with greater consistency and density of nutrients.

The cons to forage feeding:

- Forage feeding is not necessary for calves fed texturized starter grain. This starter formulation puts calves at lower risk for acidosis because the starch in whole or partially processed grains is not as readily available, and thus will not ferment as quickly in the rumen.
- Early feeding of hay (in calves as young as Day 1 of life) can discourage calves from consuming starter, and thus lower their energy intake.
- Calves have limited space in their digestive tracts. Bulky forages fill this capacity quickly, suppressing appetites and again limiting energy intake.
- Forage breaks down in the rumen into the amino acid acetate, which does nothing for rumen development. Grains, on the other hand, are fermented into butyrate and propionate, both of which play important roles in rumen development.
- Variability in feed consumption can lead to uneven weaning groups. Some calves prefer forage over grain, and vice-versa, leading to inconsistent growth patterns among similarly aged animals.

Draxxin News: Draxxin is going to be a generic product which will significantly reduce the price. I would like to share a couple of thoughts about this and some costs savings you should be aware of.

- Zoetis has incredible rebates for small farmers who are not part of the Leaders' Edge program. These include a \$100 rebate on a 100 ml bottle.
- We don't know when the generic will arrive, it should have been here already so there must be some production problems. When it does arrive it will probably be cheaper than Draxxin AFTER the rebate, so **DON'T STOCK UP ON DRAXXIN BECAUSE OF THE REBATE!**
- Take home; If you need Draxxin for sick calves use it wisely and take advantage of the rebate. Don't buy extra.

Across our entire group of veterinarians, we want to help you in every way possible. That includes providing you with prompt service. The challenge we have is keeping busy as dairy farms evolve and what they need and expect from their veterinarian also changes. Our group is constantly discussing the contrast between our sick cow calls and herd projects. If a veterinarian is at a herd check (with cows caught and a producer and an employee involved with checking cows), the veterinarian is committed to finishing the project. However emergencies do occur, sick cow calls come in, and producers want us to respond promptly. With each passing year, the amount of time our practice is asked to commit to individual sick cows and emergencies continues to shrink. Right out of college I routinely visited 20 farms a day. The entire practice of 10 veterinarians now gets 20 sick cow calls in a week. The real demand for our time is a commitment to be at a producer's farm at an appointed time for an extended time, often half a day. We don't like to show up late afternoons to see sick animals, but often that is what happens due to the low number of calls and other scheduled commitments. One way to help with this situation is to call in with sick cows earlier in the day. There is no guarantee, but it does keep us from backtracking through a particular area.

1099 Questions: Every year we get questions about whether clients need to send us 1099's. The answer is "Yes if..." (1) the services component of your vet bill is over 600 dollars, and (2) you deduct our bill as an expense from your business. Most vet bills are about 50:50 product and services so if you want you can consider about half your vet bill as services. Ultimately do what your accountant recommends.

Dr. Monty and his wife have a great relationship.

- I was over at dinner the other night and Monty said to Denise, "This soup is really great. Never make it again."
- Denise asked Monty to clear the table. It took him two tries and he had to run really fast, but he got over it.
- Denise said to Monty one evening, "You're not listening to word I'm saying". Monty looked up and said, "That's a funny way to start a conversation dear."
- Monty and I were out grouse hunting with Monty's 10-year-old pointer and Monty looked over at me and said "Life isn't fair, I get a great retriever and after 10 years I need a new one, and I'm stuck with the same wife my whole life."

On another note, we hope everyone has a Happy

Valentine's Day 😊❤️

