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## Colostrum

### I know we keep banging on about colostrum, but is it really gold?

Well it isn't LITERAL gold, but the more you get into your neonate, the more likely they will stay alive to pay off your bills OR just to cuddle. So yes, I would compare it to gold. Ruminants, camelids and equids of all shapes and sizes get their first antibodies from this magical 'liquid gold'. When calves do not get enough antibodies from colostrum, the risk of scours, respiratory disease and overall death increases by upwards of fourfold in the first 60 days of life. Something to remember is not all colostrum is the same.

Your first choice of colostrum should always be the mothers, or another mother (same species or different) from your farm. The real thing is always best as it's a superfood rich in fats, protein, vitamins, minerals farm-specific antibodies and growth factors. The next choice might be a neighbour if they have a supply, but you do need to be mindful of the possibility of bringing new diseases onto your farm. To avoid this you could work on having your own supply of colostrum on farm by saving and freezing it. For instance, if an animal gives birth and the neonate doesn't initially survive (avoid abortions), you could take colostrum from the dam over the first 12-24 hours, label with the date in a liquid tight container. This can last 2-7 days in the fridge or 6-12 months in the freezer. The key is to NOT microwave, but warm it up slowly in a water bath. You need to be careful not to damage those antibodies as they are only little, fragile proteins! A great habit to get into is to test your colostrum with a Brix refractometer or colostrometer before you freeze it to make sure it is good quality.

## 5 Qs of Colostrum!

**Quickly**- Needs in the first 2-6 hours

**Quantity**- 10% of body weight  
**Lamb (3-4kg)= 150-200 mls** (total 600-800ml in first 24 hours)

**Calf (40kgs) 2 litres** (total 6-8 L in first 24 hours)

**Quality**- Check with a Brix refractometer or colostrometer

**sQueaky clean**- Hygiene

**Quantify**- Vet takes bloods sample (24 hours-7 days old) to make sure your colostrum management is working

We can see in Figure 1. that no powdered colostrum comes close to ewe colostrum at 50 g/L of antibody level. Many of the inexpensive colostrum powders have their protein levels bumped up with whey or egg protein powder. This is no substitute for actual antibodies.

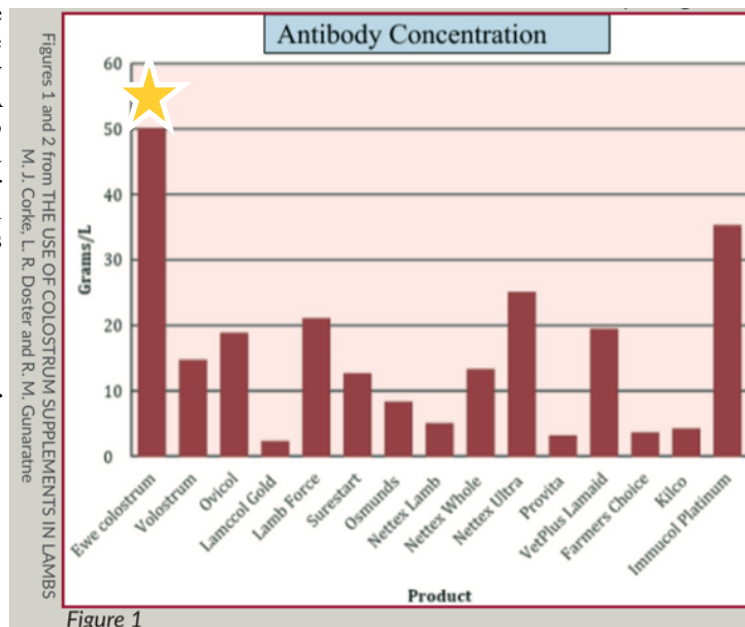


Figure 1

## Equine Clinics NO VISIT FEE!

We are now offering regular clinics next door at **Dodderhill Equestrian Centre** for routine dentals, vaccinations, blood sampling, weighing and gastroscopy.

### Next clinics:

25th March

May TBC

Gastroscopy on clinic days at **Dodderhill EC** will be at a reduced price of £200 (including sedation).

Please phone the office  
01905 773262



Composition:	Composition - Whey protein powder, Colostrum powder.
Colostrum, Whey protein, Whey powder, Vegetable oil blend, Dextrose, Dried egg powder, Short Chain Fructo-Oligosaccharides, Magnesium Hydroxide, Yeast product, Grape pips solubles.	<b>Analytical Constituents:</b>
	Crude Protein 76%
	Crude Fibre 0%
	Crude Oils & Fats 10%
	Crude Ash 3%
	Sodium 0.15%
	Net. Wt. 10 Y Sac. B

Figure 2. shows the ingredient lists of two

colostrum powders. Looking at the ingredients of your colostrum powder can give an indication of quality. They are listed by order of inclusion. We can see that product A is made mostly from real colostrum. Product B is mainly whey protein.

Figure 3. Although product B looks more affordable, we need to consider the cost per gram of antibody it delivers.

	Powder for a lamb dose	Amount of antibody in a dose	Is the fat level adequate?	Cost per dose	Cost per gram of antibody
Product A	25g	5.2g	Yes	£1.59	£0.31
Product B	50g	2.1g	No	£2.65	£1.26

Figure 3

As vets, we really don't like most powdered colostrum because a lot brands don't scientifically compare to the real stuff. The Canadians have changed opinions by creating dried whole bovine colostrum. The **Saskatoon Colostrum Company Ltd (SCCL)** have taken excess maternal colostrum which has been heat-treated to remove pathogens (viruses and bacteria) but kept the antibodies stable to do their job. There are no fillers such as whey, egg protein etc, just the good stuff. This is the colostrum we have collectively decided to sell at the practice because we think it is the best on the market and we want the best for you and your immunocompromised neonates! If you are using powdered, you might as well pay for a good quality product with high antibody levels.

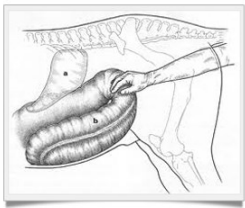
# Horse Impaction Colic

Each season has risks for different types of colic. Bad weather and the need to rely on dried forage (hay and haylage) mean that winter is our prime season for impaction colic. Impaction colic occurs when partially digested material becomes stuck part way around the digestive system. This can happen for a number of reasons; if the material hasn't been adequately chewed or is very dry it can be more likely to become stuck. Worms can also narrow the intestines meaning that the material cannot pass through as easily.

Impaction colic has very similar symptoms to other types of colic

- Restlessness or agitation
- Eating less or reduced droppings
- Tiredness or lethargy
- Abdominal pain (flank watching or kicking at the belly)
- Clinical changes (increased heart and respiratory rate, reduced gut sounds)

*As part of our clinical exam we may preform a rectal examination if it is safe to do so. Often we can feel an impaction on rectal palpation.*



How are impaction colics treated?

Most impaction colic cases respond well to treatment at home, but can take a little longer to clear than some other types of colic. In addition to pain relief and gut relaxants we may give a fluid bolus, either directly into your horse's vein or into the stomach via a nasogastric tube. We often add extra salts to these fluids to help hydrate the impacted material. In some cases, hospitalisation may be required for more intensive treatment and/or surgery may be recommended if the horse seems very painful.

How to reduce your risk of impaction colic?

- Regular (annual) dental checks with a vet or registered EDT are important to help your horse chew forage effectively so that there are less long fibres reaching the gut
- Add extra water to feeds and forage during cold weather, this helps to encourage water uptake and replace the water content your horse would normally get from wet grass
- If your horse needs to stay in for a longer period due to wet weather or an injury, try to break their meals and hay nets into multiple smaller feeds and nets to discourage them from gorging and maintain a more natural digestive pattern.

## Blue Tongue Update:

We are currently in the low risk period with an anticipated rise in BTV cases in the spring. The question on whether or not to vaccinate is not as simple as a 'Yes or No'. Every farm scenario and county will have different disease risks. Worcestershire and parts of

Warwickshire had little to no cases last Autumn, but we have to remember that livestock movements to sales, BT approved slaughter markets or slaughterhouses will put us at a slightly higher risk. Even in the low risk period— any incoming animals coming have the potential to bring disease and mites, which may pose a risk to this area.

Should you vaccinate? The following website allows you and your vet to help decide whether vaccine is the right decision for you and your livestock. If you have any queries, please phone the practice to discuss.



<https://ruminanthw.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Questions-for-vets-to-ask-clients-to-help-decision-of-whether-to-vaccinate-against-BTV3-02.pdf>

ruminanthw.org.uk

## Liver Fluke: Test Don't Guess

Do you graze ruminants all year round outside? Do you know whether you have liver fluke on your farm? Do you ever see animals with 'bottle jaw'? Did you treat and are not sure if you should treat again?

This is a great time of year to bring in a pooled faecal sample to check to see if we have a liver fluke problem with our in house egg count.

**DON'T FORGET TO CHECK YOUR VACCINE DATES IN YOUR HORSE'S PASSPORT**

## FARM REMINDERS:

- Please order vaccines well in advance as we are having a lot of disruptions and unavailability
- Calibrate your drenching guns to ensure correct dosing
- CLOSANTEL- CARE WITH OVERDOSING

## Sheep Scab Testing Tups

Blood testing your tups for sheep scab antibodies at least 2 weeks after tupping time and contact with all of your ewes can be very useful for monitoring scab within your flock. This tells us whether there has been recent exposure and if any treatment is needed.

**MacArthur Barstow & Gibbs**



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