

# Newsletter JANUARY 2023

**GRENNAN**  
& SONS

Happy New Year

## WHOLE MILK OR MILK REPLACER?

By Joe Naughton – (B. Agr. Sc.) – 086 145 2586

We all know that whole milk is a wonderful feed for calves but the facts are that there are several solid reasons why it makes sense to feed milk replacers instead.

### 1. Economics

- Assuming a 54 cent/lit base price for February and March milk, feeding 6 litres of Whole Milk/day will cost €3.34 per calf.
- The equivalent 6 litres of **Wonder Thrive** (750grams) will cost €2.50 per calf including the cost of heating water.
- That means a **saving of up to €60/calf** when using **Wonder Thrive** this spring in comparison to whole milk. So the economic advantage of using Calf Milk Replacer (CMR) over whole milk is at an all-time high.

### 2. Consistency

- **Wonder Thrive CMR** will deliver a much more consistent feed in terms of its nutrient composition, than whole milk.
- Milk constituents will vary a lot depending on stage of lactation, cow diet etc. and this can definitely cause digestive upset and/or nutritional scours.

### 3. Calf Health

- Whole milk feeding on many farms means feeding waste milk. Waste milk contains pathogens such as E. coli, Streptococcus, Salmonella, Mycoplasma as well as possible transmission of Johne's disease.
- **Wonder Thrive** is free of all the above. Also, beware of feeding antibiotic waste milk, particularly to heifer calves. This has been shown to contribute to antibiotic resistance in dairy herds.

### 4. Shelf Life

- With whole milk, the microbial content increases dramatically if milk is left at room temperature or above. It is common that some milk collected during morning milking may not be fed until the afternoon. This also poses a serious threat to calf health.
- **Wonder Thrive CMR** contains Calcium Formate which preserves the milk replacer and inhibits pathogen development.

### 5. Nutrient Balance

- Whole milk is lower than **Wonder Thrive CMR** in several important vitamins such as A, D3, E, B1 and trace minerals such as Selenium, Iron, Copper and Manganese. Low levels of vitamins A, C and E as well as reduced stores of copper and manganese have been shown to impair immunity in calves.

- **Wonder Thrive CMR** range is 23% crude protein with 17% oil. The dairy and oil products are carefully selected to match the digestive properties of whole milk so there are no digestive upsets when transitioning young calves over to it, from whole milk.

### 6. Disease Prevention

- **Wonder Thrive CMR** comes with the options of added disease fortifications such as **Lungbooster** and **Gut Guard**.
- **Lungbooster** is a completely natural additive for the nutritional maintenance of a healthy respiratory and digestive system. It gives added protection against pneumonia and gives added protection against Cryptosporidium and Coccidiosis.
- **Gut Guard** is also a completely natural feed additive. We have seen it work very effectively over the last 2 years in preventing pathogens such as Cryptosporidium, Coccidiosis, Clostridia and E. coli from attaching to the gut wall and gaining an infectious foothold.

With all the above taken into consideration, seriously consider feeding **Wonder Thrive** to your calves this coming Spring as there is a financial reward as well as performance and health advantages.

## What the Farmer Says



*'On a busy farm, you need trouble-free calves and that's what we get since we started using this product.'*

Padraig & Alan Gilligan of Gilligan Farm Fresh Meats,  
Four Mile House, Co. Galway.

# TÚS MAITH LEATH NA HOIBRE! (A GOOD START IS HALF THE BATTLE!)

By Shane Gonoude - (B. Agr. Sc., M. Sc.) - Ph: 087 646 6707

We are now on the countdown to the first of the new arrivals for 2023. Hopefully, you are using this time well to get the calving area, calf facilities, the milking parlour and most importantly the cows ready for action again.

Ensure cows have adequate feed space over the coming weeks. Their dry matter intake will usually become suppressed as they near calving and adequate supplementation to maintain gut fill and blood glucose levels is essential at calving time. All cow's should get 100-150g of a good pre-calver mineral in the last 6-8 weeks pre-calving e.g. **Grennan's Elite Pre-Calver Minerals**.

If you decide to supplement with concentrates, then our **Easy Calver Nuts** or better again, our **Immuno Pre-calver Nuts** will deliver a fantastic balance of Energy, Protein, Pre-calver Minerals and massively improve calf vigour, ease of calving, colostrum quality and cow health at calving.

We are seeing tremendous benefits across multiple farms, in terms of both cow and new-born calf health from our **Immuno Range** of pre-calving and early lactation supplements. These work by greatly improving White Blood Cell activity and thereby strengthening the entire immune system.

We recommend them highly, particularly in light of the pressure coming on antibiotic use and the current value of having a healthy herd. They need to be fed for at least 3 weeks before calving and ideally up to 6 weeks before calving, so you still have time to introduce these to your cows, if only as a specific farm pack feed where you have your pre-calver minerals already on farm. Talk to any member of our Technical team for further information.

Look out for the early warning signs of SCMF (sub-clinical milk fever). Has it previously been an issue on the farm? Has your mineral analysis highlighted high K/DCAB forages which may increase the risk?

Reach out now if you have any concerns or if you have any issues with the first few cows to calve on the farm (retained cleanings, slow to calve, etc.).

Small dietary adaptations can make Calcium mobilisation by the cow work much more successfully, reducing stress

on both the cow and the farmer! Impaired immune and muscle function are side effects of poor Calcium mobilisation which can, in turn, contribute to a host of secondary issues incl. poor rumen function, reduced appetite, mastitis, metritis and an array of metabolic diseases such as LDA, ketosis, and fatty liver.

Don't forget, if you are experiencing any issues on farm this spring, that we, like your vet are part of your team and will be happy to support you through this challenging period in any way we can, to ensure your cows and calves get off to the best start and are set up for a successful and productive 2023!

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# THE IMPORTANCE OF COLOSTRUM AND GETTING CALVES OFF TO A GOOD START

By Aisling Claffey - (B. Agr. Sc., Ph.D.) - Ph: 086 031 7483

Colostrum is essential for the survival of all new-borns, because it sets the animal up for a healthy and productive life.

It is a lot richer than normal milk in many aspects but especially in its content of antibodies also known as immunoglobulins (IgG). IgG are proteins that are built by the immune system to prevent infectious disease. Calves are born with no antibodies as they cannot cross the placenta and therefore, they rely entirely on the passive transfer of antibodies from their dam's colostrum. It is vital that sufficient colostrum is consumed as soon as possible after birth because the ability of the calf to absorb antibodies starts to decline after birth. This decline is progressive and ceases completely after 24 hours.

Calves that don't receive enough colostrum will have what's known as FPT (failure of passive transfer). These FPT calves are more susceptible to neonatal disease and in extreme cases, death. The additional benefits of good colostrum management are many. They include higher liveweight gain and better lifetime productivity to name but two.

The quality of colostrum is defined by the concentration of antibodies carried within it. Quality can vary massively between cows, largely due to the dilution effect that is unavoidable in higher yielding cows. The second and subsequent milking of a dairy cow contains less antibodies and should not be considered as colostrum but as transition milk. Transition milk is milk that is not saleable. This can be for 6 milking's due to sealers or eight milking's where dry cow tubes were used.

Colostrum should never be mixed with transition milk and fed to new-born calves, because the antibody levels in the

second milking are only half that of the first milking. A major factor in addressing colostrum quality is ensuring you feed first milk only.

Colostrum quality should be assessed before feeding. It's quality is measured in terms of the level of proteins present as per a Brix Refractometer reading. The Brix refractometer measures the levels of dry matter in the milk. The higher the level of dry matter, the higher the IgG concentration will be.



Brix Refractometer

## COLOSTRUM HYGIENE

Colostrum hygiene is also an important factor to consider. On a typical farm there are plenty of opportunities for bacteria to infect colostrum and cause problems. We have to recognise that colostrum and all milk products are ideal mediums for bacteria to establish themselves and multiply rapidly. This is particularly true when it first comes out of the cow.

It's now at the exact right temperature to promote rapid bug multiplication. Be aware, bacterial numbers in milk can double every 20 minutes at room temperature. In a recent trial, some colostrum was harvested containing 3,600,000 bacteria cfu/ml - a bacterial soup! The target level is less than 100,000 cfu/ml.

So in essence, everything we do from the point of milking the cow, to the point when it arrives in the calf's mouth has to be done quickly and efficiently, taking care to keep it clean and reduce the time bacteria have to breed.



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# FODDER BEET GUIDELINES FOR WEANLINGS

By *Brian Delaney* – (B. Agr. Sc.) – 086 044 9592

Fodder beet is an excellent source of energy for cattle of all ages and will really boost performance during the winter months. However, there are a few things to consider when feeding beet to young stock.

Normal feeding rate to weanlings would be 5kg/head/day, but you can go up to 10kg/head/day for heavier weanlings. It should always be washed and chopped.

Beet is a low protein feed and weanlings need more protein than finishing stock to ensure that they grow and develop to their full potential, rather than just becoming “fleshy”. To balance fodder beet for protein, 70g of hi-pro soya or 140g of 22% beet balancer need to be fed for every kg of beet fed.

75-100g of a high-Phos beet mineral/head/day (e.g. **Grennan's Hi-Phos Rumen Boost Beef**) is required to balance mineral requirements, especially phosphorus and calcium.

Feeding beet with wet silage could lead to poor performance due to the diet being too low in dry matter. Dry concentrates such as **Super Weanling Crunch** or **Hi-Energy Beef 16** nuts would be a better complementary feed to wet silage.



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## COMING SOON! GRENNAN'S GUT GUARD GEL

By *Aaron Kealey* – (B. Agr. Sc.) – 086 199 9148

We are delighted to be soon launching our new exclusive **Gut Guard Gel**.

### WHAT IS GUT GUARD GEL?

Our **Gut Guard Gel** is a completely natural feed additive that has been found to deliver dramatic health benefits in new-born / young animals such as lambs, calves, and piglets. Our **Gut Guard Gel** is especially formulated to support animals in the critical first few days of life. It also acts as an immune support supplement, helping to stabilise the gut & overall health of any young animal experiencing scour.

### WHAT DOES IT DO?

- It strengthens the gut wall by tightening the junctions between cell walls, preventing leaky gut.
- Prevents pathogens such as *Coccidiosis*, *Cryptosporidium*, *Clostridia* and *E.coli* attaching to the gut wall and gaining an infectious foothold.
- Promotes good bacteria and in doing so it naturally creates more room and a better environment for beneficial bugs.
- Where and when pathogen bugs do gain an infectious foothold and cause scour, **Gut Guard Gel** always reduces the duration and severity of these scours.

It is easy to administer and should be given **2 - 3 hours AFTER** the first colostrum feed. This provides the newborn animal with sufficient time to absorb the all-important immunoglobulins from the colostrum before the gut wall is tightened up by **Gut Guard**.

