



H7 – Colostrum

Through colostrum, new born piglets are assured of antibodies against diseases in the herd and of the first vital energy.

An optimum intake of colostrum :

1. the piglets come to the teats
2. the sow is healthy
3. the sow has well immunity
4. the piglets get enough time to suckling milk.
5. the piglets can manage
6. the piglets obtain immunity are based on colostrum from sows in the herd
7. split suckling: If the biggest piglets from a litter are isolated for a while, the smallest piglets can assured colostrum needs



All piglets are getting colostrum

Colostrum serving for weak piglets:

- you can milk colostrum into the piglet's mouth
- You can serve the milk into a cup. Select a calm sow, what farrowing or has just farrowed, and milk sow by hand. Alternatively, you can give to weak piglet colostrum for example using a disposable syringe

Insufficient colostrum intake:

- the piglets have taken too early from the own sow
- the smallest piglets are not taken care of
- the sow is sick
- the sow was not vaccinated correctly or in right time



This piglet must get also colostrum





Extra comments- Colostrum

Only that colostrum, what have produced by own herd sows protects piglets against pig specific diseases on that herd.

1. Sows excrete colostrum during farrowing. The piglets searching the udder to get intake of colostrum. Piglets need minimum 12 hours with the sow, before you can be certain that they have a sufficient intake of colostrum. If a piglet is unable to get the udder, you must help it. If the piglet is unable to suckle, destroy it.
2. A sick sow gives much less milk than a healthy sow. If the sow is exhausted after a difficult farrowing or is showing clear signs of M.M.A. (look bottom), consider alternatives: either letting the piglets get colostrum from another sow or milk by hand colostrum from a sow that has just farrowed and give this to the piglets. See H15 - Disease and treatment of sows.
3. If herds all sows have vaccinated correctly, then sows have well immunised against the diseases on the herd. Gilts could have lower amount of antibodies against the diseases, even them have vaccinated correctly. That could see for example higher diarrhoea risk on gilt litters. The gilts must have had these diseases themselves or be vaccinated against them.
4. Research seems, that six hours after birth of the individual pig 70% (2 /3) only have taken in sufficient amounts of colostrum. 12 hours after birth, this figure has increased to 95%. Therefore, recommended to let all piglets stay 12 hours with their own mother or with a sow that has just farrowed that produces colostrum. If the litter is bigger and every piglet can't get colostrum, do split suckling (point 7.) After that is also possible to move to nursing sow (H9 Nursing sow) first birth piglets when they have been enough time under own sow, on that case you must to know what piglets are come first!
5. Regardless of the piglet's size, weak piglets are unable to take in sufficient colostrum. Be aware of:
 - a. Underweight piglets, particularly in large litters.
 - b. Hypothermia piglets (too cold causes irreparable damage to the intestines).
 - c. Piglets what born weak.
 - d. Weak legs (frog leg -piglets)

Help these piglets get colostrum somehow!

6. **Colostrum from the piglet's mother:** Contains optimum antibodies composition and contains antibodies and mother-offspring specific growth factors that can transmit to the piglet.

A colostrum bank (fresh or frozen): The correct amount of colostrum must be assured (see below).

Colostrum from another sow in the herd: Has the optimum composition of antibodies.

Colostrum from another herd: This is not available choice! Contains pig specific antibodies against many diseases, but not against the diseases in the specific your own herd, such as coli diarrhoea.

Colostrum from cows: Contains antibodies, but not against necrotising enterocolitis, reddening, coli diarrhoea etc. This should only be used as a source of energy after the piglet has taken in colostrum from the sow. Cow colostrum protects the intestines just as sow colostrum, but does not provide the right immunity. If given too soon, cow colostrum may prevent absorption of the sow's colostrum and jeopardise the piglet's life.

7. Experience shows that in very large litters (>15-16 liveborn) and new born litters where is differing sizes of piglets, there usually can be a lot of fighting on the udder. The smallest piglets lose the battle for teats. You can ensure smallest piglets colostrum intake by using split suckling, isolate the 5-6 largest piglets in the heat corner for 1- 2 hours, on that while the smallest piglets can get colostrum. If farrowing is complete, check is the sow still giving milk after isolate the largest piglets, otherwise the smallest will not get milk or heat. In that case it is better isolate all piglets for 45 minutes, and then let the 8-12 smallest out when sows milk giving starts. Let the largest piglets out after 30-45 minutes.

Expressed colostrum:

- a piglet at weigh 500 g needs 15 ml colostrum 3 times with min. one hour's interval
- a piglet weigh 1 kg needs 30 ml colostrum 3 times with min. one hour's interval
- hand milked colostrum can keep 3 days in a fridge, if cooled immediately and used in portions
- you can freeze colostrum and defrost it in a microwave at the lowest frequency. The temperature of the milk must not exceed 35 degrees.





M.M.A (Mastitis, Metritis, Agalactia)

Udder infection, uterus infection and agalactia, what have called usually M.M.A, is complex syndrome that could see quite soon after farrowing (12 hours – three days). Bacterial infection on udder and / or urinary tract could cause it. M.M.A. increases piglets mortality and reduces weights.

Mastitis

Bacterial mastitis. In many cases only one or two milk gland have exposed.

Metritis

Uterus infection, this can find of leaking from vulva

Agalaktia

Sow milk production decrease or totally end. Often, it will unnoticed before the piglets looks hungry or / and lose weight.

