



Colostrum Quality

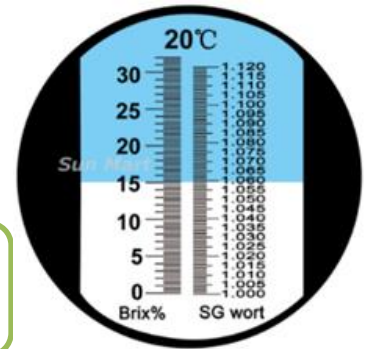
Assessing Colostrum Quality

Step 1: Prior to use, make sure the glass and sample cover of the Brix refractometer is clean with no residue.

Step 2: Place a few drops of colostrum on the glass of the refractometer and lower the cover.

Step 3: Hold the Brix refractometer up to a light source, perpendicular to the light.

Step 4: Look into the eyepiece and read the Brix value at the line between the light and dark areas that appear on the scale. Interpret the values as follows:



Poor

Less than 22%
2nd and 3rd feedings

Good

22% or greater
1st feeding

Source: Adapted from J. Heinrichs & C. Jones, Colostrum Management Tools

Top Ten Reasons for Disappointing Herd Colostrum Results

Calves suckle before leaving the calving pen (i.e. time in pen >2 hours)	Fresh cows are milked >6 hours after calving
Colostrum supplement or replacement powder is added to colostrum	Insufficient expectations of colostrum replacement products
Colostrum bacterial contamination	Later summer or heat stress
Required immunoglobulin mass is not delivered where there is adequate efficiency of absorption	Insufficient colostrum available because low quality and first calf heifer colostrum is not used
Calves aren't tested	Test results are not reliable

Source: S. M. McGuirk, DVM, PhD