



## Taking care of newborns: from postnatal care to early vaccinations

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Frequently we hear the phrase 'farm to fork', which is used to describe a healthy herd and a satisfied end user. [Good husbandry](#) yields profit for a farmer.

Therefore, **appropriate handling of neonates at birth is critical to ensure survival**. Today's edition illustrates the importance of post-natal care of neonates on a farm.

It all begins on a farm, through appropriate animal welfare practices in respect of the [fundamental animal freedoms](#).

### **Guarantee [access to colostrum](#): a natural vaccine**

A vital step in mammalian neonates such as calves, lambs and kids is exposure to **the first milk, also known as colostrum**. Which is a rich fluid secreted by mammals and it facilitates the **development of immunity** in newly born neonates. Colostrum also contains natural antibodies that are passed onto neonates.

Calves, lambs and kids receive their vaccines from three months, this is so because of the passive immunity obtained earlier from the dames' colostrum. Therefore, **neonates should not be deprived of colostrum**, in cases where the dame dies, a farmer should seek advice from a veterinarian. On commercial farms, excess colostrum is frozen and used when dire situations arise.



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## **Vaccinate newborns**

With aid from veterinarians vaccination programs have to be followed appropriately and on the precise season. We recommend to **register in advance the vaccination calendar** on the [Farm Management App](#), so you will receive an alert when the vaccination day gets closer and have heads up on costs, kind of treatment and involved animals.

Vaccine is a substance that stimulates the production of antibodies, which ultimately **provides immunity to the host against diseases**. Disease causing agents can be fungal, bacterial, parasitic or viral. The quantity, dose and transportation of these vaccines are essential so as to maintain their efficacy. Moreover, manufacturer's instructions are always attached to vaccines.

Furthermore, immediate isolation of neonates is necessary when a farmer notices ill health. This suppresses the spread of diseases. Nursing of isolated neonates is necessary.

## **Commons livestock diseases to vaccinate against**

### **Cattle**

Brucellosis, Anthrax, Black quarter, Botulism, Pasteurellosis, Lumpy skin disease, Bovine viral diarrhea.

### **Sheep and goats**

Orf, Enterotoxaemia, Tetanus, Black quarter, Pasteurellosis, Cheesy gland, Bluetongue, Rift valley fever.

### **Pigs**



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Parvovirus, Leptospirosis, Erysipelas, Atrophic rhinitis, Porcine circovirus.

### **Chickens**

Newcastle, Mareks, Gumboro, Fowl pox.

## **Provide a safe shelter for animals**

Fondling on neonates must be minimal, unless when assisting with feeding or inspecting for any anomalies. This allows **ample rest as neonates are still weak** to be chased or moved around on long distances. Therefore, a resting shelter is a necessary requirement to have on a farm. Furthermore, on cold winter nights a **source of warmth** may be provided to keep neonates warm. For example infra-red lights are used to keep piglets warm on most pig farms.

**Avail sufficient space for movement**, which aids in exercising the neonates as they grow and develop muscle in the early life stages. Stiffness and joint problems may arise when neonates are confined in smaller areas. Hence, the freedom, 'free from discomfort'.

In addition to these basic actions, modern day farms have devised tools that help warn a farmer during the birthing process among farm animals. These early detecting tools or remote sensors have helped reduce high death rates in neonates.

On the [Farm Management App](#) you can monitor and track the **animals** that are going to deliver and start tracking newborns from the moment of birth, so to have all life events, characteristics, medical treatments undergone accessible anytime in the future.



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To face life challenges, such as diseases, **neonates always need support from the farmer** to ensure good health and growth.

## References

- [Bluetongue vaccine now available for farmers in Britain](#)
- [Farm animal vaccination - NOAH](#)

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