




# How is your colostrum management?

## How to test colostrum and passive transfer in your calf

**Step 1: Test your colostrum using a cow-side test**

**How?**

Colostrometer reading > 50 g/L, in green zone



**Step 2: Take a blood sample from your calf**


**When?**

24 h after colostrum intake. Research has shown sampling can be done up to 7 d of age

**Step 3: Test for passive transfer of immunoglobulins in your calf**

**How?**

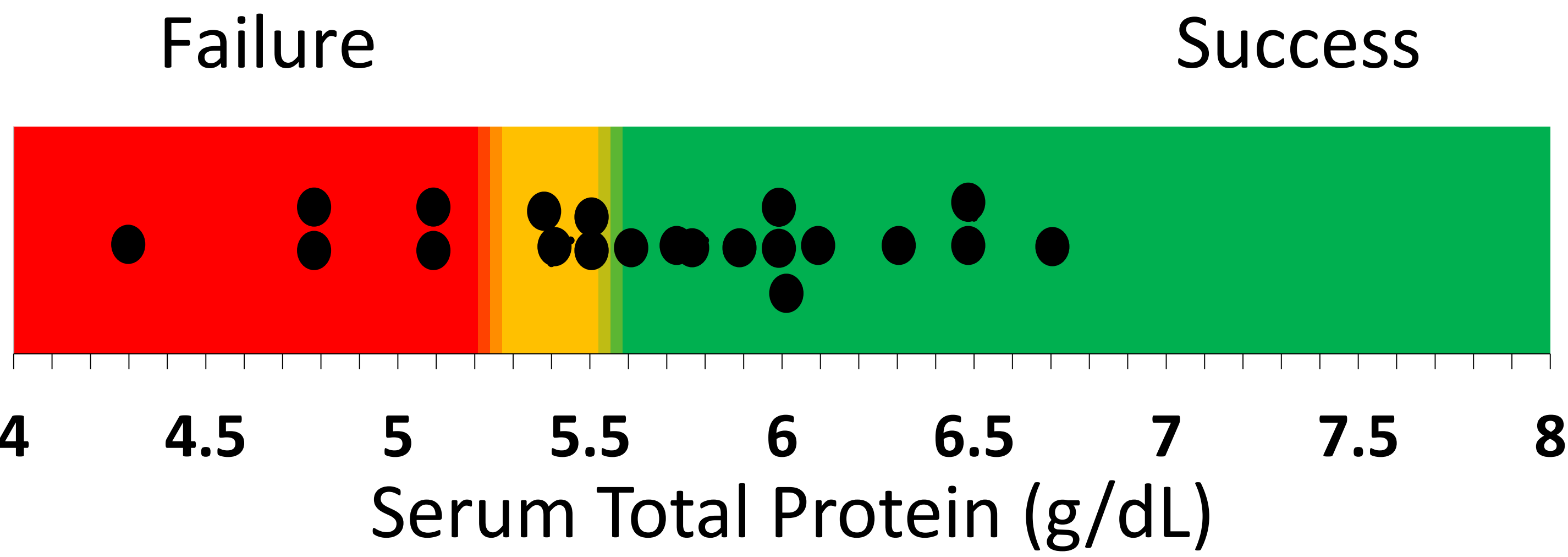
Refractometer reading must be above 5.2 g/dL



## Benchmarking colostrum management on BC farms

Commercial farms in the Lower Fraser Valley, BC participated in a benchmark study on colostrum management. Using measurements of serum total protein in calf blood samples, we were able to provide farmers with data on how well they were managing colostrum on their own farm, and how well they compared against other local farms.

**Farmer’s own data on their calves:**



**How farmers felt about their own data:**

“I didn’t think it would be as bad as it was, how low some of (the calves) were. You started putting the calves with the numbers, and it made sense because they just weren’t getting enough colostrum... it’s nice that we figured it out.”

**How farmers compared to their peers:**



**How farmers felt about peer comparison:**

“It put a little bit of a level of competition... knowing where I am... There was room for improvement.... I’m not competitive, but there is a sense of pride to be on the higher end... But probably mostly just knowing where you are is really, really good.”

16 ± 10 % (range: 3 – 39 %) of all calves in the study failed passive transfer

Atkinson et al., 2017. JDS. In Press

## What did these farmers do to improve? The 3 Q’s and Test

**Quality**

of colostrum:

> 50 g/L

**Quantity**

of colostrum:

4 litres or 1 gallon

**Quickly**

feed colostrum:

within 6 h of birth

**Test**

calves for passive transfer

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