

# Is dipping navels worth the trouble?

## Simply put, the answer is YES!

The key to disease prevention in newborn lambs is maximizing the passive transfer of immunity thru colostrum and limiting their exposure to environmental pathogens.

We often put a lot of emphasis on colostrum management and too little on reducing pathogen exposure.

The frequency of navel infections has been connected to:

- The cleanliness of the lambing environment
- The cleanliness of the lambing jug
- The adequacy of colostrum management
- And navel dipping.

The consistent use of navel dipping in newborn lambs using a recommended protocol results in fewer deaths and infections than when navels are not dipped.

Pathogens that cause disease in young lambs are most often passed to the lamb through the lamb's environment. Bedding and manure that contains organisms or oocytes are a ready source of contamination. Newborn lambs are at real disadvantage when it comes to fighting disease. Stressed, with virtually no defense until they consume colostrum the newborn lamb's umbilical cord exposes the lambs circulatory system to the environment. The umbilical vessels extend from the umbilical cord to the bladder and the liver allowing bacteria from the environment to easily enter the lamb's blood stream. Scours, arthritis, pneumonia, peritonitis and other form of disease in young lambs can be traced directly back to infection through the navel.



Dip the navel; **don't use a spray**, as soon as possible after the lambs are born with a 7% tincture of iodine solution. The recommended protocol can be reviewed in

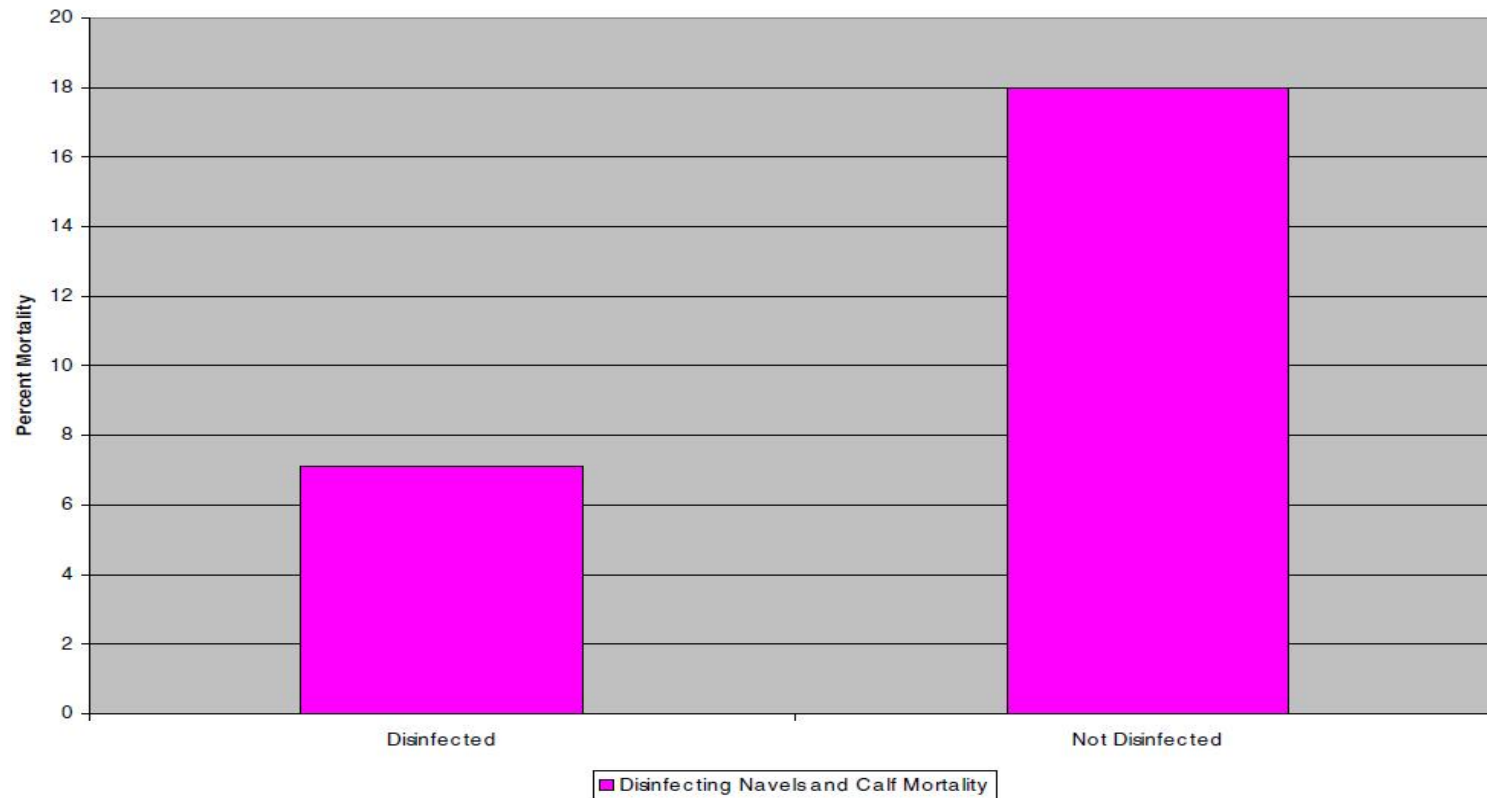
[Protocol for Dipping Navels](#)

Effective navel dipping will make the full length of the umbilical cord brown from the dip as well as the navel opening on the lamb's belly.

**No amount of navel dipping will compensate for a dirty lambing environment, it is critical to keep the lambing area clean!**



Disinfecting Navels and Calf Mortality



**The above chart refers to calves but the principal applies to lambs as well.**

**85% of navel infections are neither diagnosed nor treated!**

**It is the secondary infections that usually get our attention and cost us time, money, and lost production.**

**Dr. Kathleen Parker 6 Dec 2013**

**Not to be reproduced or copied without the express permission of the ASBA.**