

INCALF

Checklist for Transition Cow Management

Use this checklist to help you implement the key steps for a successful transition period.

1 Feed the transition diet for as close to 21 days as possible

This relies on accurate calving dates. Early pregnancy testing all cows and heifers by a skilled operator between 5-15 weeks of gestation will enable this.

2 Sourcing and testing forage

- Obtain a single consignment of forage from one source if possible.
- Test forage with both a standard feed test and wet chemistry mineral analysis.
- Test pasture if it will comprise more than 2kg DM/ Π cow/day in the transition diet.

3 Balancing the diet*

- Attend a Putting Transition Cow Management into Practice workshop.
- Work with a nutrition advisor or use the Transition Diet Milk Fever Risk Calculator to adjust feeding levels to meet energy and protein requirements and manage milk fever risk.
- If feeding a concentrate designed for milkers, check that it doesn't contain bicarbonate as a buffer.
- * Do you plan on using a commercial lead feed pellet, DIY anionic salts (e.g. mag chloride) or something else? Use the same concentrate type as you will use after calving (e.g. grain or pellets).

4 Choosing your springer paddock(s)

Chose paddocks that have not been irrigated with effluent or received heavy applications of potassium fertilisers. Rotating calving paddocks is good practice to avoid nutrient loading.

- Repair leaking troughs, boggy gateways and restrict access to dams to manage mastitis risk. Also scrape or wash down feed pad regularly (if applicable).
- Calculate daily pasture mass and strip graze to manage intakes especially if it will comprise more than 2kg DM/cow/day in the transition diet.
- If applicable, ensure you have enough trough space (at least 75cm per cow) and/or hay rings (at least 1 per 20 cows) to ensure all cows and heifers have equal access to transition diet.
- Use a mineral dispenser if putting DIY salts (e.g. mag chloride) in water troughs. These are available from most rural stores. Calibrate regularly according to manufacturer's directions.

5 Staff

Ensure staff have been adequately trained in their required tasks and simple, written Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are available to them.

6 Feeding out

- Ensure you've made realistic allowances for wastage (may be up to 35% when fed on bare ground).
- Start milking cows and heifers early if they have udder oedema or are running milk.

If feeding concentrates through the dairy:

- Check and calibrate feed systems regularly.
- Observe for mastitis and apply teat disinfectant to all surfaces of teats daily.

7 Monitor the success of your program

- Use Cow Health Problems at Calving Tally Sheet or existing herd recording system to monitor cow health.
- Use Transition Program Review Worksheet to assess how well the program worked and plan any changes.

For more information on transition cow management visit dairyaustralia.com.au/farm/animal-management/ fertility/transition-cow-management

The content of this publication including any statements regarding future matters (such as the performance of the dairy industry or initiatives of Dairy Australia) is based on information available to Dairy Australia at the time of preparation. Dairy Australia does not guarantee that the content is free from inadvertent errors or omissions and accepts no liability for your use of or reliance on this document. You should always make your own inquiries and obtain professional advice before using or relying on the information provided in this publication, as that information has not been prepared with your specific circumstances in mind and may not be current after the date of publication.

Dairy Australia Limited ABN 60 105 227 987 E enquiries@dairyaustralia.com.au T +61 3 9694 3777 F +61 3 9694 3701 dairyaustralia.com.au