

In normal circumstances your herd may not be at high risk of developing acidosis. However, drought conditions force many farmers to change their feeding practices. Use this Risk Assessment Grid to make sure you are not inadvertently putting your operation at high risk. Read the options in the three columns of this grid and highlight the box that best describes what happens on your farm.

| HERD | LOW risk Green zone | MODERATE risk Orange zone | HIGH risk Red zone |
|------|--|------------------------------|---|
| | Small variation in cow liveweight within the herd | | Large variation in cow liveweight within the herd |
| | Older cows | | First calvers |
| | Mid-late lactation cows | | Fresh cows |
| | Small variation in Days in Milk (as per seasonal calving herd) | | Large variation in Days in Milk (as per split or year-round calving herd) |
| | Not subjected to adverse weather conditions | | Subjected to adverse weather conditions e.g. cold, wet, windy weather or hot, humid weather |

| FEEDS | LOW risk Green zone | MODERATE risk Orange zone | HIGH risk Red zone |
|-------|--|---|---|
| | Maize / Sorghum / Oats | Barley / Triticale | Wheat |
| | Grains coarsely ground – minimum powder seen in dairy when grain fed | | Grains finely ground – powder seen in dairy air when grain fed into bins |
| | <3 kg grain/concentrate fed per feed | 4 kg grain/concentrate fed per feed | >5 kg grain/concentrate fed per feed |
| | <6 kg total grain/concentrate fed per day | 8 kg total grain/concentrate fed per day | >10 kg total grain/concentrate fed per day |
| | <3 kg palm kernel extract (PKE) meal fed per day | 4 kg palm kernel extract (PKE) meal fed per day | >5 kg palm kernel extract (PKE) meal fed per day |
| | <2 kg dry grape marc fed per day | 2.5 kg dry grape marc fed per day | >3 kg dry grape marc fed per day |
| | >40% NDF in total diet | 35% NDF in total diet | <30% NDF in total diet |
| | 75% of fibre sources in diet are >1.5 cm length | 65% of fibre sources in diet are >1.5 cm length | <50% of fibre sources in diet are >1.5 cm length |
| | Forage / Concentrate ratio of diet 60 / 40 | Forage / Concentrate ratio of diet 50 / 50 | Forage / Concentrate ratio of diet 40 / 60 |
| | Adequate protein in diet | | Inadequate protein in diet |
| | Longer stem, mature pasture | | Young, lush, leafy, rapidly growing pasture |
| | No low pH silages fed | | Significant amounts of low pH silages fed |
| | Forages and high fibre by-products kept dry during storage and feedout | | Forages and high fibre by-products allowed to get wet during storage and feed-out (mycotoxins) |
| | Wet feeds, e.g. grape marc, vegie waste, brewers grains, etc, fed within 7 days of delivery to farm | | Wet feeds, e.g. grape marc, vegie waste, brewers grains etc. not fed within 7 days of delivery to farm |
| | Buffers, neutralising agents and rumen modifiers included in diet at appropriate feeding rates / cow / day | | Buffers, neutralising agents and rumen modifiers not included in diet at all or at inadequate feeding rates / cow / day |

Note: < = less than; > = greater than.

| FEEDING MANAGEMENT | LOW risk Green zone | MODERATE risk Orange zone | HIGH risk Red zone |
|------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| | Cows put onto pasture at 3+ leaf stage | Cows put onto pasture at two-leaf stage | Cows put onto pasture at one-leaf stage |
| | Total daily grain/concentrate amount provided in <i>three</i> feeds a day | Total daily grain/concentrate amount provided in <i>two</i> feeds a day | Total daily grain/concentrate amount provided in <i>one</i> feed a day |
| | Good control over the quantities of feed dispensed to each cow by the dairy feeding system | | Poor control over the quantities of feed dispensed to each cow by the dairy feeding system |
| | Little separation of feed ingredients and additives by the dairy feeding system | | Significant separation of feed ingredients and additives by the dairy feeding system |
| | Variable feeding rate to cows in dairy | | Flat feeding rate to cows in dairy |
| | Changes to the amount and types of feed made gradually | | Changes to the amount and types of feed made suddenly |
| | Cows not hungry when given unrestricted access to large amounts of feed in paddock or elsewhere | | Cows hungry when given unrestricted access to large amounts of feed in paddock or elsewhere |
| | Good transition feeding program so cows (and especially heifers) are well adjusted to grain/concentrate when enter herd | | Poor transition feeding program so cows and heifers are not well adjusted to grain/concentrate when enter milking herd |
| | Capacity to provide grain/concentrate, high fibre by-products and forages in multiple feeds over the 24 hours of each day using mixer wagon, forage cart or feed pad / troughs | | Capacity to feed grain/concentrate in dairy only, separate to forages |
| | Consistent daily feeding routine, with little variation in timing and amounts fed | | Inconsistent daily feeding routine, with great variation in timing and amounts fed |
| | Short intervals between feeding of forages and grain/concentrate each day | | Long intervals between feeding of forages and grain/concentrate each day |
| | Plenty of feed space outside the dairy for forages and high fibre by-products | | Restricted feed space outside the dairy for forages and high fibre by-products |
| Plenty of access to drinking water | | Restricted access to drinking water | |

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