**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/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