Risk assessment grid:
Factors affecting rumen function and risk of acidosis

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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.

	LOW risk Green zone	MODERATE risk Orange zone	HIGH risk Red zone
HERD	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

	LOW risk Green zone	MODERATE risk Orange zone	HIGH risk Red zone
FEEDS	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.

	LOW risk Green zone	MODERATE risk Orange zone	HIGH risk Red zone
FEEDING MANAGEMENT	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 *three* feeds a day	Total daily grain/concentrate amount provided in *two* feeds a day	Total daily grain/concentrate amount provided in *one* 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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