

Feeding in and after flood

Feeding priorities

Feeding is a priority for your herd if:

- You haven't planned your feed purchases for the coming months
- OR
- You aren't sure if your milker diet will produce sufficient milk income to achieve a satisfactory margin over feed costs to support your farm business through recovery
- OR
- You don't have a permanent feedpad and need to set up an area for feeding fodder / mixed rations to cows while your pastures and crops regenerate.

In and after wet conditions, the key things to focus on with feeding are:

- Doing a sound monthly feed budget to guide your feed purchases
- Buying feeds on quality and value rather than their sticker price
- Formulating diets that will generate sufficient milk income to achieve a satisfactory margin over feed costs to cover your other costs
- Ensuring that as much of the feed you have bought is actually eaten and not wasted during storage and feed-out.

For your next step, see the checklist over the page.



Feeding in and after wet conditions

Start with this checklist ...

Buying feed on quality and value

- Have you calculated your monthly feed requirements?
 - Have you done a feed budget based on realistic assumptions, including feed wastage, that includes requirements for your dry cows and young stock?
 - Have you secured enough fodder to carry you through winter?
 - Are you keeping track of grain and fodder market trends and taking advantage of opportunities to source feed-grade grain at a discount to milling-grade grain?
- Are you buying good quality, good value feeds?
 - Are you visually assessing a feed's physical quality first, and then looking beyond the price tag to assess its nutritional value using feed analysis?
- Are you confirming all verbal agreements with your feed suppliers in writing?
 - Are you covering quality and supply terms as well as price?

For more information, go to Fact Sheet 2

Getting the diet right

- What level of milk production are you going to feed for?
 - Will it generate enough income to enable you to dilute your maintenance feed costs and other relatively fixed costs and achieve a satisfactory margin over the feed costs?
- Is your milker diet nutritionally balanced, cost-effective, palatable and safe?
 - Are cows' daily requirements of energy, protein, fibre, minerals and other nutrients being met?
 - Have you managed the risks of ruminal acidosis, moulds and mycotoxins, botulism and toxic plants?
- Are you achieving satisfactory milker feed conversion efficiency?
- How will you reintroduce pasture and other grazed forages back into the diet?
- Are you also providing nutritionally adequate diets to your young stock and dry cows?
 - Have you explored options to agist young stock in other regions?

For more information, go to Fact Sheet 3

Converting feed into milk, not waste

- Are your current feed storage facilities adequate to minimise feed spoilage and wastage costs?
- If you don't have a feedpad, have you set up a semi-permanent feed-out area for feeding fodder / mixed rations?
 - Will it allow you to keep cows off pastures until they are the right pre-grazing height?
 - Does it provide adequate feeding space per cow, and minimise feed wastage and cow health problems such as mastitis and lameness?
- Have you considered grouping cows (e.g. into a fresh herd and a stale herd) so that you can feed them separately to better meet their nutritional needs?
- Do you have a simple, efficient daily feed-out routine in place that everyone on the farm implements safely?

For more information, go to Fact Sheet 4

Look at the relevant Grains2Milk fact sheet or talk to your nutrition adviser.

For more information go to www.murraydairy.com.au