

CHECKLIST FOR FARM SYSTEM CHANGE

This checklist is designed to help you through the process of significant farm system changes. The questions were drawn from farmer experiences.

Consider each question and make your own notes in the spaces provided to help you identify what you've got sorted, and areas of uncertainty, for further discussions with the farm team or your advisors.

	YOUR COMMENTS
1. Assess the current farm system	
How does the performance (e.g. financial, environmental) of your current farming system compare with similar farms? <i>(i.e. benchmark against others to determine if more can be gained from improving your current system, rather than making large changes)</i>	
What are the external issues preventing your farm reaching its potential? <i>(e.g. financially, environmentally, people productivity and wellness)</i>	
What on-farm issues are preventing the farm achieving your objectives under current setup? <i>(e.g. is it skills, resources, infrastructure?)</i>	
2. Determine your goals and the drivers for change	
What are the reasons for the change? <i>To ensure the change will address your main issue or goals consult a farm consultant or use the DairyNZ goal setting tools</i>	
What opportunities might change provide for you, your farm, and the farm team? <i>Discuss opportunities with business partners, accountants, bankers, and farm team.</i>	
3. Assess the potential impacts of the change	
What is the new farm system that will deliver the required change? <i>Use whole system modelling (e.g. Farmax) to test system feasibility, Overseer (environmental outputs), benchmarks and KPI analyses (e.g. from DairyBase or RedSky), and farm consultant advice to determine the system required to meet your objectives</i>	
What are the experiences of other farmers who have implemented the desired change? <i>(Visit farmers running the proposed system and experience a day in the life of their farm)</i>	

YOUR COMMENTS

Are you the right person to assess the impacts of the change or do you need external help?

How will your personal life change after the farm system is changed?

How will this farm system change effect existing goals?

(e.g. succession planning, debt repayment)

Does your team have the required skills once the farm system has changed?

(Assess the current farm team skills against those required for the new system)

What initial training needs to be allocated, and ongoing upskilling to keep up infrastructure or technology changes?

What new health and safety, and wellness, risks might be created by the change?

What new infrastructure, resources and machinery will be required?

(Consider the time needed to use, clean and maintain these, and how that fits with daily tasks)

What will good look like once the change is made?

(set financial, and physical KPI's- know what the best farmers in the new system are achieving)

Will it meet regulatory requirements? *(e.g. environment, health and safety, labour)*

GIVEN YOUR ANSWERS TO PREVIOUS QUESTIONS, WILL YOU PROCEED WITH THE CHANGE?

4. Manage the change

Do you have the project management skills to manage farm system change of this scale?

How long will it take, how much will it cost, and what impact will it have on the short and long-term budget?

What will the tasks needed to manage the change look like? Who will do what?

(Create a weekly guideline of time required to carry out different tasks through the change process)

5. Assess success of the change

Along with the whole team, critically analyse whether objectives have been met by the change

Create a process for continuous improvement this includes regular analysis of KPIs and comparisons with industry benchmarks