Set your pasture up for autumn and winter

- Complete autumncut/verify feed budget to set targets for average pasture cover, cow condition and supplements. Visit dairynz.co.nz/feedingtools.
- Apply nitrogen, especially after a drought or dry summer, to encourage tillering. Refer to DairyNZ Farmfact: Nitrogen use after a dry summer (7.4).
- Monitor post-grazing residuals and aim to graze milking to 1500-1700 kg DM/ha (7-9 clicks on the rising platemeter) or 3.5-4.5 cm compressed height.
- If dry, avoid frequent over-grazing, especially on new pastures e.g. grazing lower than 1400 kg DM/ha (5-6 clicks on the rising platemeter).

Plan your pasture renewal

- Identify under-performing paddocks using the DairyNZ Pasture Condition Score Tool and use the actions suggested to establish a plan for each paddock.
- Calculate the economic return from pasture renewal, using the DairyNZ Pasture Renewal Calculator.
- Plan to fit any feed gaps arising from pasture renewal e.g. supplements, nitrogen, early cutting.
- Aim to have new pasture sown by 31 March.
- Select the right endophyte e.g. AR37 for black beetle and porina protection.
- Select the right cultivar e.g. diphloid v. trihaploid, late v. early flowering.
- Do not mix cultivars with different heading dates in a paddock. Consider sowing the farm in cultivars with a range of heading dates (e.g. half the farm sown in early heading cultivars, the other half in late heading cultivars).
- Ensure endophyte seed is viable (get the seed certificate). Minimise planting time and how long seed is out of cool storage (to keep the endophyte viable).

Use supplements wisely

- Dispose of known bulls before starting to feed out supplements. Make culling decisions early and ensure bulls are fit for transport before they leave the farm. Refer to the DairyNZ Checklist for Transporting Cows. Visit dairynz.co.nz/transportingstock.
- Purchase supplements based on cents/kg DM eaten.
- Test all feeds for quality, including purchased meals. Supplements need to be calculated on cents/MJME eaten.
- Use supplements wisely.
- Calculate the economic return from pasture renewal, using the Pasture Renewal Calculator.
- Complete autumn/winter feed budget to set targets for average pasture cover, cow condition and supplements. (Table format below.)
- Review plans and systems for correctly treating cows with intramammary treatments. See DairyNZ Healthy Udder (Prevent 3 and 4) and Guideline 7.
- Set up autumncut/verify feed budget to set targets for average pasture cover, cow condition and supplements. Visit dairynz.co.nz/feedingtools.
- Visit heifers regularly with your grazier and ensure sufficient feed is available. Supplement if needed.
- Apply nitrogen, especially after a drought or dry summer, to encourage tillering. Refer to DairyNZ Farmfact: Nitrogen use after a dry summer (7.4).
- Monitor copper and selenium levels. Consider taking blood samples or liver biopsies of 5-10 cows in late autumn to determine herd risk. Refer to DairyNZ Farmfact: Sodium deficiency in dairy cattle (3.2) and Copper deficiency in NZ dairy cattle (3.3).
- Supplement other trace elements, as necessary, for your region. Refer to DairyNZ Farmfact: Trace element supplementration (3.4).
- Plan vaccinations for leptospirosis, BVD, rotavirus.
- Consult vet about any abortions, to ensure rest of herd is not at risk.
- Continue monitoring faecal e-coli score counts and supplementing with zinc, as needed.
- If in a tick area, monitor cows for anaemia as an indicator for Theileria infection – consult vet if concerned.

Manage cow condition

- Condition score the herd every two to three weeks, scoring at least 70 cows. Trained BCS advisers can be found at dairynz.co.nz/bcsadvisers.
- Focus on cows below the BCS target – feedly out to achieve BCS and feed cover targets.
- Consider OAD in a separate herd to protect young and thin cows by reducing the energy needed for walking, while maintaining feed intake.
- Autumn pasture is not as effective as high quality supplements (grain, PKE, maize and spring pasture sillage). Cows take longer to put weight on with pasture-only diets than pasture and supplements (supplements fed to meet requirements above maintenance) as shown by the table below.

Review mastitis

- Continue teat spraying after every milking. Check coverage and volume used – aim for 20 ml per cow per milking. If dissatisfied with test condition, see DairyNZ Healthy Udder (Prevent 3 and 4) and Guideline 7.
- If bulk milk SSC ≥ uL (sodium chloride concentration) is risk of grazing, identify cows with high SSC and dry off early. See Guideline 12.
- Book wet consultation to decide most appropriate treatment for cows at drying off. See Guideline 14.
- Identify mastitis culs from clinical and herd records. See Guideline 15.
- Set up grazing management so that cow production/tonnes drops 10-12 weeks before drying off. See Guideline 16.
- Review plans and systems for correctly treating cows with intramammary treatments. See DairyNZ Healthy Udder (Treat 3) and Guideline 17.
- For first three weeks after drying off, check cows weekly (palpate or feel teats) for signs of clinical mastitis. See Guideline 18 and 19.
- Set up maintenance schedule for milking machines, order replacement nubbins and book a machine test. See Guideline 20.
- Monitor copper and selenium levels. Consider taking blood samples or liver biopsies of 5-10 cows in late autumn to determine herd risk. Refer to DairyNZ Farmfact: Sodium deficiency in dairy cattle (3.2) and Copper deficiency in NZ dairy cattle (3.3).
- Supplement other trace elements, as necessary, for your region. Refer to DairyNZ Farmfact: Trace element supplementration (3.4).
- Plan vaccinations for leptospirosis, BVD, rotavirus.
- Consult vet about any abortions, to ensure rest of herd is not at risk.
- Continue monitoring faecal e-coli score counts and supplementing with zinc, as needed.
- If in a tick area, monitor cows for anaemia as an indicator for Theileria infection – consult vet if concerned.
- Use the DairyNZ QuickPlan booklet to get started (dairynz.co.nz/quickplan).
- Review contracts (e.g. winter grazing).
- Keep an eye out for DairyNZ events such as Mark and Measure and Cashflow Budgeting Workshops. These can help support your financial and strategic management. Visit dairynz.co.nz/events.

Monitor other health issues

- Be vigilant for signs of lameness and maintain races to minimise lameness.
- Maintain copper and selenium levels. Consider taking blood samples or liver biopsies of 5-10 cows in late autumn to determine herd risk. Refer to DairyNZ Farmfacts: Sodium deficiency in dairy cattle (3.2) and Copper deficiency in NZ dairy cattle (3.3).
- Supplement other trace elements, as necessary, for your region. Refer to DairyNZ Farmfact: Trace element supplementration (3.4).
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Look after your young stock

- Visit heifers regularly with your grazier and ensure sufficient feed is available. Supplement if needed.
- Weigh young stock and ensure they are meeting growth rate targets.
- Use the DairyNZ MCAt Book formula: “Expected mature liveweight = 503 kg + Livwt “B”” to estimate weight-for-age targets for heifers:
  - 35% of mature liveweight by 6 months.
  - 60% of mature liveweight by 15 months (pre-mating)
  - 90% of mature liveweight by 22 months (pre-calving).
- Consult your vet to decide best management approach for rising 1 and 2 year heifers.
- Pregnancy test heifers and remove empties.
- Ensure vaccinations are up-to-date and don’t forget clostralid/leptospirosis booster vaccinations to get them in sync with the main herd.
- If in a tick area, monitor young stock for anaemia and Theileria, as these conditions may make stock more susceptible to other health issues.

Review and plan with your people

- Review the season to date with your team – what has worked, what hasn’t worked, what could you do differently? Remember to celebrate those successes.
- Get an understanding of what your team are planning to do for next season.
- Identify if you will need to recruit. Get a copy of the DairyNZ QuickStart Recruitment Kit – visit dairynz.co.nz.
- Conduct a performance appraisal with each of your people. Use this as an opportunity to set some training and development targets for the coming year. Include any additional training in your budget.
- Keep your people ‘in the loop’ by planning and discussing upcoming activities.
- Review the farm health and safety policy and guidelines with your team.
  - If you haven’t already, consider discussing timesheets with the team and introducing them.
  - Take the opportunity to recharge your own batteries before the coming season.

Review your budgets and make business plans for next season

- Reflect on the current season’s budget and consider your cash position for year end – will you have a surplus to re-invest or pay off debt?
- Prepare annual and monthly cashflow budgets for the season. Discuss these with farm partners, your banker and accountant. See dairynz.co.nz/ budgets for templates and guides.
- Start planning your working capital (overdraft) for next season – discuss this with your banker early, so there are no surprises!
- Use your DairyBiz reports to have discussions with your advisers and integrate it into your strategic planning process.
- Spend time with your partners/business partners clarifying what your goals are for the next five years and how to achieve them. Use the DairyNZ QuickPlan booklet to get started (dairynz.co.nz/quickplan).
- Review contracts (e.g. winter grazing).
- Keep an eye out for DairyNZ events such as Mark and Measure and Cashflow Budgeting Workshops. These can help support your financial and strategic management. Visit dairynz.co.nz/events.

Environmental management

- Keep effluent pond levels low.
- Take all suitable opportunities to irrigate and keep effluent in the root zone.
- If using a contractor to empty a pond, discuss all the job requirements and capture any agreements in writing.
- Look for opportunities to reduce water use around the farm dairy.
- Do regular feed planning to ensure the correct timing and application of nutrients, to maximise plant uptake and reduce leaching of nitrogen.
- Calculate and check N (nitrogen) and K (potassium) applications on the farm. Look for opportunities to reduce water use around the farm dairy.
- Monitor other health issues
  - Keep an eye out for DairyNZ events such as Mark and Measure and Cashflow Budgeting Workshops. These can help support your financial and strategic management. Visit dairynz.co.nz/events.
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  - Reflect on the current season’s budget and consider your cash position for year end – will you have a surplus to re-invest or pay off debt?
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  - Review contracts (e.g. winter grazing).
  - Keep an eye out for DairyNZ events such as Mark and Measure and Cashflow Budgeting Workshops. These can help support your financial and strategic management. Visit dairynz.co.nz/events.

Go to smartfarm.co.nz for more on Healthy Udder and SmartSANIM Guidelines.

For more information visit the DairyNZ website dairynz.co.nz

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