

New feeds, diets, feeding practices and smaller feed-out areas can increase the risk of herd health problems. The main issues are mastitis from faecal contamination of teat ends, lameness from hoof damage and ruminal acidosis from a poorly formulated and mixed diet or competition for trough space. These and other disorders will reduce milk production and animal welfare.

Be prepared to manage the increased risk.

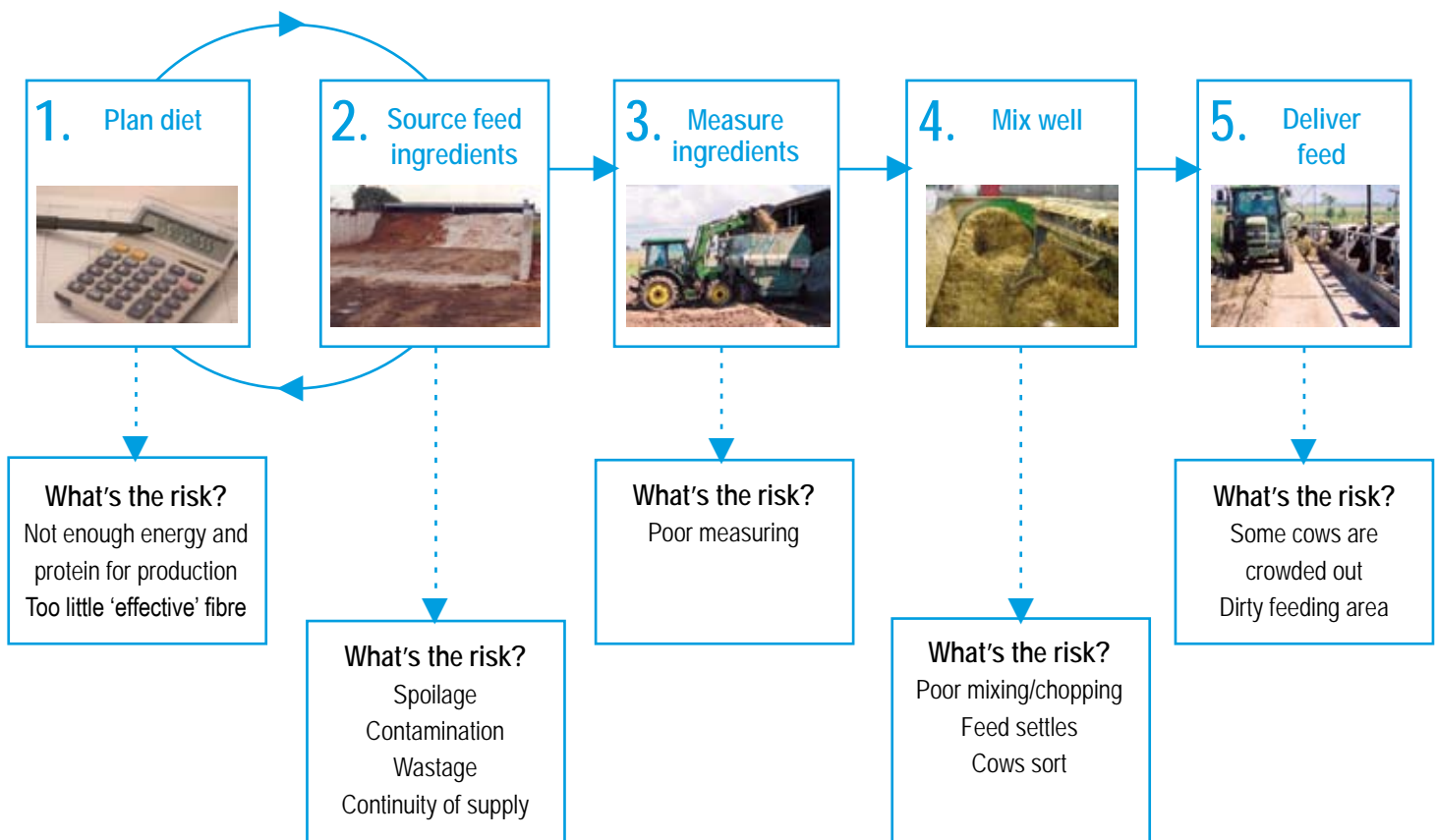
When to act?

A well-managed herd health program requires careful monitoring and knowing when to act. Trigger points can help you identify when to get help. For example:

- 6 clinical cases of mastitis for every 100 cows during calving;
- 5 clinical cases of mastitis for every 100 cows in the first month after calving;
- 2 clinical cases of mastitis for every 100 cows per month for the remainder of the lactation;
- more than 5 lame cows for every 100 cows at any one time; and
- anything abnormal on your acidosis 'Quick Checks', as described in feed.FIBRE.future Fact Sheet D.

Where can it go wrong?

Mistakes can happen that will increase the risk of clinical mastitis, lameness, acidosis and other disorders. Check each step in your Flexible Feeding System to see where the potential problem areas are.



Hey, there was some good information about acidosis in feed.FIBRE.future Fact Sheets C, D and H that would be handy. Better have another read.

Step	Things to consider
1. Planning the diet	<p><i>Is there enough 'effective' fibre in the diet to reduce the risk of acidosis?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diets with less than 30% Neutral Detergent Fibre are high risk. 75% of fibre sources in the diet should be greater than 1.5 cm in length.
2. Sourcing feed ingredients	<p><i>Are there hidden problems in the ingredients you buy?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mycotoxins are a risk in hay, silage and other wet feeds, and can cause abortions. Excess nitrates in some forages can cause nitrate poisoning. Dead animals, such as rats and mice, in feed ingredients can cause botulism. Guessing feed values can result in a poorly balanced diet and lower production levels. Test the feed.
3. & 4. Measuring and Mixing	<p><i>Are the cows eating what you planned?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor ingredient measuring can increase acidosis risk, reduce production and be potentially dangerous to the cows. Poor mixing can result in feed settling/sorting. Some cows consume too little fibre and increase acidosis risk. Poor mixing where cows end up eating lumps of ingredients, such as urea, can have disastrous health consequences.
5. Delivering Feed	<p><i>How much time are cows spending in the feed-out area?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More than 4-5 hours in mud and slurry will increase risk of footrot. Less time in the feed-out area (less feeds) can increase acidosis risk. <p><i>Is the feed-out area clean?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> High faecal contamination and poor teat end condition are two big risk factors for mastitis. Teat end contact with manure in the first 2 hours after every milking (especially the first 30 minutes) must be avoided. Prepare the feed-out area surface well so that it can be scraped/cleaned. A good scraping/cleaning program will reduce faecal contamination. <p><i>Are the cows over-crowded?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crowded cows push. Pressure on hooves can increase lameness risk. Work on 9-10 square metres per cow and 0.75 metres per cow of trough area. Disease spread is greater when cows spend time in a smaller area. For example, separate a cow with Salmonella quickly to avoid spread.

**Be alert!
Reduce herd health risks.**



These cows are at increased risk of environmental mastitis.



Using these mouldy feed ingredients will increase risk of mycotoxins



Cows will sort poorly mixed feeds, increasing the risk of acidosis.

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