

All situations are different when it comes to filling the gap between the feed you have and the feed you need. You have options but they come with a price – time, money or future potential.

- Home grown pasture or crops are likely to be of higher quality and lower cost than purchased feed, so they should be fully explored first.
- Feeding more grain/concentrates is an option, but this may increase your risk of acidosis.
- High fibre by-products can be purchased to extend your fodder reserves. They are not a substitute for grain/concentrate.
- Drying off early and culling cows can reduce the demand on feed but consider the future impact on your farm business's financial position in the short and longer term.

### *Does the paddock look like this?*



Plant aggressively and take a chance after each rain event. Once it's wet, plant the rest.

Think about sowing a crop even if it is just to provide short-term feed. Don't forget to soil test and apply fertiliser if needed.

### *Does the paddock look like this?*



Manage pasture wisely. Until early spring at least, quantity is more limiting than quality. Set your rotation to graze paddocks at 3 leaf stage for ryegrass. Don't let the cows chew to less than 5cm between the clumps. This may mean putting up a back fence.

### *Put off by high urea costs?*

It's likely that even urea priced at greater than \$650 / tonne will be a cheaper source of quality dry matter than purchased supplements. (At \$650/tonne, and assuming a low response of 5 kg DM/kg Nitrogen, feed cost is 27 cents/kg DM).

What application rate are you using? Can you apply more?

What intervals are you using between applications? Seek advice.

## Looking at how to close your feed gap?



**Are high-fibre by-products an option?**

High fibre by-products like palm kernel extract (PKE) meal can help make your current fodder supply last longer.

While moderately digestible, PKE is low in effective fibre and may increase your risk of acidosis.



**Does the paddock down the road look like this?**

Some farmers reduced stock numbers earlier this season. Explore opportunities to agist dry cows and young stock. Check that there aren't any health issues to contend with.



**Too many mouths to feed?**

Culling cows can be a difficult task. Keep in mind the impact on your business next season and beyond. Empty cows should be the first to go, followed by low producers.



**Drying off early?**

Dry cows require more feed than you may think (e.g. a 550 kg cow in her last month of pregnancy requires about 10 kg dry matter per day). Energy is needed to maintain their condition, grow a calf and repair an udder.

Think about feeding grain/concentrate to your dry cows – even in the bail between milkings if convenient.



**Can you feed more grain/concentrate safely?**

Grain/concentrate are the cheapest source of feed energy and are easy to buy.

The Risk assessment grid (Fact Sheet C) can help you decide what feeding rate of grain/concentrate you can be comfortable with.

**Think it's a bit risky?  
Talk it over with an adviser.**

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