

Webinar summary: Rebuilding cow condition

This webinar focuses on managing and rebuilding cow condition in late lactation. It examines key metabolic drivers, feeding strategies, and the impact of fat distribution on cow health and production.

In this webinar:

1. Overview of cow condition

- Cow condition fluctuates throughout the season, with both fat and protein storage playing significant roles.
- Managing cow condition from mid-lactation, rather than waiting until the dry period, is crucial for optimal recovery.

2. Key factors influencing condition gain

- Metabolic drivers include sufficient energy and protein, with quality feed and balanced gluconeogenesis essential for effective condition gain.
- Key energy sources for condition gain include PKE, rumen bypass fats, and live yeast to aid rumen stability.
- Protein levels should be sufficient, particularly above 14% crude protein (CP), to support condition growth and prevent excess protein issues.

3. Fat storage dynamics

- Cows store fat in three areas: subcutaneous, visceral (around internal organs), and muscular fat.
- Visceral fat, especially, can increase metabolic risks, including ketosis and fatty liver.
- Managing fat type distribution is essential, with a focus on increasing subcutaneous fat and avoiding excess visceral fat.

4. Best practices for rebuilding condition

- Gradual condition gain (no more than 0.5 BCS increase) is recommended, particularly from mid-lactation onwards.
- Avoid rapid condition gain, as it can lead to adverse metabolic effects at calving.
- Protein balance during the dry period is critical for proper fat deposition.

5. Implications for animal health

- Lipolysis (fat breakdown) during condition rebuilding can increase inflammation, leading to risks like ketosis, fatty liver, and metabolic disorders.
- Cows with excess visceral fat face higher metabolic risks, including reproductive challenges.

6. Summary

- Ensuring proper protein levels and managing fat deposition is vital for improved milk production, health outcomes, and reproductive success.
- Best practices involve monitoring and managing cow condition from mid-lactation, with specific attention to protein and energy balance, to prevent excessive visceral fat and metabolic complications.

For more details, watch the webinar or download the slide deck.