## Webinar summary: Setting the cow up for success – Transition cow management

This webinar addresses key strategies and considerations for successfully managing dairy cows through the transition period, focusing on metabolic processes, cow condition, diet, and stress management.

## In this webinar:

- 1. Overview of metabolic processes
  - Transition impacts the rumen and liver significantly, with energy and nutrient dynamics critical for cow health.
  - Effective management ensures cow recovery post-calving, improved milk yield, and overall health.
- 2. Essential factors for a successful transition
  - Cow condition must average between 4.8 5.2 Body Condition Score (BCS) at calving.
  - Diet calculations must consider energy, protein, and effective fibre (eNDF).
  - Metabolic balance, particularly calcium, phosphorus, magnesium, DCAD, and trace minerals, supports optimal cow health.
  - Ideal transition length is 21 days, though this can vary between 14 to 28 days based on dietary changes.

## 3. Cow condition management

- Proper cow condition ensures reserves, good appetite, and optimal metabolic balance.
- Over-conditioned cows face higher liver stress, poor recovery, and increased metabolic issues.
- Under-conditioned cows struggle with low production and variable appetite, needing careful energy allocation and protein management.
- 4. Diet formulation and calculation
  - Accurate feed calculation based on cow condition and live weight is vital.
  - Energy must be managed carefully to support rumen papillae growth without overstimulating the liver.
  - Protein levels ideally should range between 16-18% to support metabolic demands, especially for at-risk groups.
  - Fibre intake (ideally over 45%) is essential for rumen health, stimulating rumination, and reducing stress.
- 5. Metabolic balance and liver function
  - Balanced minerals, especially calcium, magnesium, phosphorus, and DCAD, are key.

- Liver function benefits from specific amino acids, methyl donors, B vitamins, and trace minerals to enhance cow resilience.
- 6. Best feeding and supplementation practices
  - Feed must be consistently and adequately allocated, prioritising essential nutrients first.
  - Supplement blending and palatability significantly impact feed intake.
  - Managing environmental factors such as feed accessibility and weather protection is crucial.

## 7. Reducing cow stress

- Minimising group changes, providing ample clean water, and ensuring ad-lib fibre availability are fundamental.
- Shelter from bad weather and gentle handling reduce stress, enhancing cow health and productivity outcomes.

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