

Guidelines for the Formulation and Labelling of Dairy Cow Transition Feeds

The SFMCA Federal Council has agreed to work with Dairy Australia in a Transition Feeding Project. The project has three main objectives, these being:

- Ensure that Australian dairy farmers have access to transition feed products and programs whose formulations and directions for use are based on the latest research on the transition cow's needs and the use of transition feeding programs pre-calving.
- Help dairy farmers overcome the many practical challenges faced when making a good transition program work effectively on their farm (ie. the people, cow, and feeding management issues, minimising mastitis risk etc.)
- Better equip nutritionists, vets and farm advisers to 'trouble-shoot' problems that farmers encounter with transition feeding programs and address these effectively

To this end Dairy Australia funded a review of transition feeding research and this review can be downloaded [here](#).

The SFMCA supports the request made by DA that manufacturers of transition feeds should address the following three actions:

1. Formulations

Internal checks by each stockfeed manufacturer of its dairy transition feed products to ensure they are consistent with the latest nutritional recommendations provided by Grains2Milk and InCalf (refer to the publication identified above).

2. Labelling

The addition of Calcium, Phosphorus, Magnesium and Dietary Cation Anion Difference (DCAD) levels in all transition feed products is printed on bag tags and promotional literature. This information is to be provided so that farmers and their advisers can incorporate transition feed products with other feed ingredients to meet the Ca, P, Mg and DCAD levels now recommended in the total transition diet.

3. Feed analysis methods and units

Adoption of the "short" DCAD equation ($DCAD = (Na + K) - (Cl + S2)$) and reporting in the units milliequivalents per kilogram Dry Matter (mEq/kg DM) as the agreed industry standard (refer to review publication).

Dairy Australia has agreed, that on the basis FeedSafe accredited manufacturers of transition dairy feeds comply with these three actions, then they will promote to dairy farmers that they should only purchase transition feeds from FeedSafe accredited manufacturers rather than purchasing from non-accredited suppliers or attempting to mix their own transition feeds on farm.

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