

### Seasonal Update:

It's been a very dry start to the year for all dairy regions in WA so far, with minimum and maximum temperatures consistent for long term January averages for most of the state. The chance of rain for dairy regions in the state over the next few weeks is also low. With low rainfall and high temperatures comes the challenge of ensuring cows are comfortable in the heat, and have access to fresh drinking water at all times, and shade during the peak of the day.

### Heat Stress

Allow 200-250 litres of drinking water per cow per day in hot weather, this is double what cows would usually require. Provide a minimum of 0.75m of water trough space per cow at feed out areas, with sufficient water pressure to provide 20 litres per cow per hour, so that troughs can cope with peak demand. It is important to be frequently checking troughs, and ensuring all fittings and pipes are operating correctly. On a very hot day it doesn't take the herd long to empty a trough and knock around your float. The potential impacts of heat stress on your herd are costly, cows with heat stress are likely to have:

- ✗ Decreased 6 week/100 day in calf rates
- ✗ Lower conception rates
- ✗ Higher risk of embryonic death
- ✗ Lower calf birth weight and calf viability
- ✗ Reduced milk production by up to 10-25%, and up to 40% in extreme circumstances
- ✗ Decreased milk protein percentage by up to 0.2-0.4%
- ✗ Increased risk of udder infections
- ✗ Decrease in rumen pH, which may increase the risk of acidosis and ketosis, and then laminitis
- ✗ Depressed immune function
- ✗ Reduced ability to digest and absorb nutrients in feed
- ✗ Increased maintenance energy requirements by 20-30% to keep cool
- ✗ Decrease in dry matter intake by 10-20%

For further information on managing heat stress visit: [www.coolcows.com.au](http://www.coolcows.com.au)

### Feeding Heifers Over Summer:

When pasture quality is low, supplements (especially protein) are required to maintain heifer growth rates. As a general rule, when pasture quality is low, supplements containing at least 11.5 MJ ME/kg DM and 16% crude protein will be required for growing heifers. The concentrate percentage of a heifer diet should not exceed 50%, as this will increase the risk of acidosis. The acidosis risk is also increased if the NDF content of the ration is below 35% or concentrates are able to be rapidly consumed. The other consideration is macro and micro minerals. In much of Australia selenium and copper deficiency is common and cobalt deficiency can be present, especially in southern Australia. Your diet should be well balanced to provide enough energy and protein for maintenance and growth, along with containing all relevant minerals to prevent any complications in skeletal or muscular growth. For handy tools to develop heifer rations visit: [www.dairyaustralia.com.au/HeiferDietCalculator/index.htm](http://www.dairyaustralia.com.au/HeiferDietCalculator/index.htm)

### Upcoming:

Animal Welfare and Euthanasia Workshops series: Boyanup 7<sup>th</sup> February, Busselton 8<sup>th</sup> February, Cowaramup 9<sup>th</sup> February. Contact: [jessica@westerndairy.com.au](mailto:jessica@westerndairy.com.au) for further info.

Office Made Easy Workshop 9<sup>th</sup> February, Busselton. Contact: [Jessica@westerndairy.com.au](mailto:Jessica@westerndairy.com.au) for further info.



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