

# What if results are off target?

## Seasonal/split calving herds

### 1. At 8–10 weeks before drying-off

ACTIONS TO CONSIDER		
BCS results	Immediately	To prevent it happening again
More than 15% of cows are <b>below BCS 4.5</b>	<p>If possible, increase feed inputs to increase body condition in late lactation. Target all cows or just cows below score 4.5 if you can preferentially feed.</p> <p>Do a cost:benefit analysis before considering these options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Early dry-off for cows below score 4.5 in late lactation.</li><li>– Once-a-day milking in mid-late lactation.</li></ul> <p>Then, feed to maintain or increase condition during dry period.</p>	<p>Seek help from an adviser to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Examine the costs and benefits of increasing feed inputs during mid-late lactation.</li><li>– Determine if reducing stocking rate is appropriate.</li></ul> <p>Check that all cows have equal access to feed.</p> <p>If most thin cows are first calvers, then review management of heifers.</p>
More than 15% of cows are <b>above BCS 5.5</b>	<p>Feed to maintain condition during dry period.</p> <p>Don't allow over-conditioned cows to lose condition when dry.</p>	<p>Seek help from an adviser to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Check diet fed throughout lactation if most fat cows have been calved less than 10–12 months.</li><li>– Determine if cows are being overfed in mid-late lactation.</li></ul> <p>If most fat cows are carryover cows, then improvements to herd reproductive performance will reduce this problem in the future.</p>

## What if results are off target?

### Seasonal/split calving herds

#### 2. At drying-off

#### ACTIONS TO CONSIDER

BCS results	Immediately	To prevent it happening again
More than 15% of cows are <b>below BCS 4.5</b>	<p>If possible increase feed inputs during the dry period.</p> <p>Target all cows or just cows below score 4.5 if you can preferentially feed.</p>	<p>Seek help from an adviser to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Examine the costs and benefits of increasing feed inputs during late lactation.</li> <li>– Determine if reducing stocking rate is appropriate.</li> </ul> <p>Check that all cows have equal access to feed.</p> <p>If most thin cows are first calvers, then review management of heifers.</p>
More than 15% of cows are <b>above BCS 5.5</b>	<p>Feed to maintain condition during dry period.</p> <p>Don't allow over-conditioned cows to lose condition when dry.</p>	<p>Seek help from an adviser to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Check diet fed throughout lactation if most fat cows have been calved less than 10–12 months.</li> <li>– Determine if cows are being overfed in late lactation.</li> </ul> <p>If most fat cows are carryover cows, then improvements to herd reproductive performance will reduce this problem in the future.</p>

#### 3. Just before calving

BCS results	Immediately	To prevent it happening again
More than 15% of cows are <b>below BCS 4.5</b>	<p>If possible, separate thin cows into a group before and for several weeks after calving and preferentially feed.</p>	<p>Increase body condition in late lactation.</p> <p>Maintain condition during dry period.</p> <p>See actions above for when there are too many thin cows at drying-off.</p>
More than 15% of cows are <b>above BSC 5.5</b>	<p>Monitor fat cows closely for health problems, especially in first week after calving.</p> <p>If possible, separate fat cows into a group for several weeks after calving and preferentially feed to reduce the risk of excessive body condition loss in early lactation due to reduced appetite.</p>	<p>If less than 15% of cows were above BCS 5.5 at drying-off, then cows have been overfed during the dry period. Reduce the amount fed to dry cows in the future.</p> <p>If most fat cows are carryover cows, then improvements to herd reproductive performance will reduce this problem in the future.</p>

## What if results are off target?

### Seasonal/split calving herds

#### 4. Two weeks before mating start date

##### ACTIONS TO CONSIDER

###### BCS results

Average herd BCS has decreased by **more than 0.6** since calving

###### Immediately

Seek help from an adviser to examine the costs and benefits of increasing feed inputs to prevent any further losses in body condition.

###### To prevent it happening again

Review pre-calving transition feeding program with help from an adviser.  
Consider increasing feed intakes to minimise body condition loss in early lactation.

#### 5. Three weeks after mating start date

###### BCS results

Average herd BCS has **decreased further** since recorded at two weeks before mating start date

###### Immediately

Seek help from an adviser to examine the costs and benefits of increasing feed inputs to prevent any further losses in body condition.

###### To prevent it happening again

Review pre-calving transition feeding program with help from an adviser.  
Consider increasing feed intakes to minimise body condition loss in early lactation.

For more details on strategies to achieve BCS targets, go to [www.dairyaustralia.com.au/BCS](http://www.dairyaustralia.com.au/BCS)

# What if results are off target?

## Year-round calving herds

### 1. At drying-off

#### ACTIONS TO CONSIDER

BCS results	Immediately	To prevent it happening again
More than 15% of cows are <b>below BCS 4.5</b>	If possible, increase feed inputs during the dry period. Target all cows or just cows below score 4.5 if you can preferentially feed.	Seek help from an adviser to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Examine the costs and benefits of increasing feed inputs during late lactation.</li><li>– Determine if reducing stocking rate is appropriate.</li></ul> Check that all cows have equal access to feed. If most thin cows are first calvers, then review management of heifers.
More than 15% of cows are <b>above BCS 5.5</b>	Feed to maintain condition during dry period. Don't allow over-conditioned cows to lose condition when dry.	Seek help from an adviser to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Check diet fed throughout lactation if most fat cows have been calved less than 10–12 months.</li><li>– Determine if cows are being overfed in late lactation.</li></ul>

### 2. Just before calving

BCS results	Immediately	To prevent it happening again
More than 15% of cows are <b>below BCS 4.5</b>	If possible, separate thin cows into a group before and for several weeks after calving and preferentially feed.	Increase body condition in late lactation. Maintain condition during dry period. See actions above for when there are too many thin cows at drying-off.
More than 15% of cows are <b>above 5.5 BCS</b>	Monitor fat cows closely for health problems, especially in first week after calving. If possible, separate fat cows into a group for several weeks after calving and preferentially feed to reduce the risk of excessive body condition loss in early lactation due to reduced appetite.	If less than 15% of cows were above BCS 5.5 at drying-off, then cows have been overfed during the dry period. Reduce the amount fed to dry cows in the future.

## What if results are off target?

### Year-round calving herds

#### 3. 40–60 days after calving (when eligible for insemination)

##### ACTIONS TO CONSIDER

###### BCS results

Average herd BCS has decreased by **more than 0.6** since calving

###### Immediately

Seek help from an adviser to examine the costs and benefits of increasing feed inputs to prevent any further losses in body condition.

###### To prevent it happening again

Review pre-calving transition feeding program with help from an adviser.  
Consider increasing feed intakes to minimise body condition loss in early lactation.

For more details on strategies to achieve BCS targets, go to [www.dairyaustralia.com.au/BCS](http://www.dairyaustralia.com.au/BCS)