

Coaching Guide 17

Feeding Livestock

Aim: To provide an overview of feed and water needs by different animal groups on farm and how they are supplied each day

Every farm has its own feeding system – pasture, grain, mixed grain and forage, forage as hay, silage or crop. And each has different arrangement for classes of stock – dry cows and heifers at home or away, one milking herd or more, calves on the farm or away. New employees may be involved in feeding one or more groups of animals. This involves understanding animal needs, safe use of machinery and manual handling techniques.

At the end of this coaching session, the employee will be able to describe feeding routines of stock on your farm, safely handle feed (as required for their role), and ensure stock have access to fresh water at all times.

Note: this coaching guide is NOT designed to assist with training your employee to use the machinery.

Before coaching starts

Has your employee had coaching on Moving the herd and calf rearing basics? If so, some of this session may be good revision.

Will your new employee need to use vehicles and machinery to do their farm tasks? If so, you will need to plan the required training, supervision and induction

Prepare yourself to explain, demonstrate and then observe to provide feedback on

- Diets for different stock (milking herd, transition cows, calves)
- Feeding routines
- Water needs and supply

COVID-19

- Reinforce PPE use, personal hygiene and cleaning/disinfection of shared surfaces after each use
- Ensure the farm COVID-19 protocol for how to work with other team members is followed, including during the coaching session

Feeding system on the farm

- ❑ Give an overview of what feeds are used on the farm – pasture, grain, mixed grain and forage, hay, silage and crops.
- ❑ Describe what type of feed is required for each class of adult and young stock – dry cows, springers (transition diet), milking cows, heifers.
- ❑ If calves are on farm, explain the feeding stages for their age (colostrum, milk, calf grain/pellets, hay and fresh water) and the feeding methods you use for calves. (This is a chance for revision from Calf rearing basics – ask the employee questions to see what they remember).
- ❑ Discuss which areas of feeding your new employee is likely to be involved with in their job:
 - Pasture allocation when moving cows and setting up temporary electric fences
 - Grain/pellets feeding in the dairy
 - Feeding on a feed pad
 - Putting out hay
 - Feeding calves
 - Any other.....

Feed systems	<p>Why do different groups of cows get different feeds?</p> <p>What system is used to feed milk to calves on the farm?</p>
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Daily feeding routine for cows

- ❑ Explain the daily feeding routine for the milking herd, including the importance of quality feed and water (animal welfare, herd health)
 - Review pasture allocation if strip grazing
 - Discuss and demonstrate the key steps in feeding in the dairy (feeding system, looking to see grain is eaten)
 - Discuss and demonstrate feeding out other feed types if required
 - Discuss manual handling and correct lifting techniques if this is involved
- ❑ Look at some troughs in the paddock and explain:
 - How water is supplied to the trough
 - What to look for to be sure it is working (filling, not leaking)
 - How much water a milking cow needs every day (50-100 litres)
- ❑ Look at the springers and discuss the feeding routine for them each day. Get your new employee to help with this.
- ❑ Explain basic herd observation and what to report (lameness, lethargy, not eating).

Feeding routine	<p>Explain our feeding routine for the milking herd.</p> <p>What feeds do the springers get each day?</p>
Water	<p>Why is it important to check troughs (access to water) every day?</p> <p>How much does a milking cow drink in an average day?</p>
Safe manual handling	<p>Why is it important to assess how heavy an item or load is before lifting it?</p>
Herd observation reporting	<p>What are the main health issues to look out for when feeding the herd?</p>