

REVIEW AND REFRESH!

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As we approach the end of 2024, it is a good time to take stock and review how the year has gone, before facing into a new year and calving season. Here are some useful suggestions to help you prepare:

1. Use the CellCheck Winter Housing checklist: If you haven't already, review it to ensure your housing conditions are optimal for winter. It is also a good time to check roadways that may be in need of repair before the next grazing season as this is not something you will have time to do once spring kicks off. The checklist is available [here](#).
2. Review milk records and develop a herd health plan for 2025 (including a mastitis control and treatment plan): Use the insights from your records to identify any previous issues and to create a tailored plan with your veterinary practitioner to help make the year run more smoothly. Depending on what vaccines are used on your farm, December may also be a better time to give the annual booster, for the cow's immune system and your workload; this is a conversation worth having with your vet.
3. Develop guidelines or standard operating procedures (SOPs) for routine farm tasks such as colostrum collection and storage, milking machine cleaning procedures etc. Making them visible in key areas will also help ensure the correct procedures are still being completed during the busy period, particularly if you have multiple or temporary staff members.
4. Service your milking machine: Book a service for your milking machine and replace the liners before the 2025 calving season starts as again this is not a job you need to be doing during peak calving.
5. Schedule milk recording: Contact your milk recording supplier now and schedule a milk recording within six weeks of calving. While you may not record all of the herd, early data will be invaluable in assessing dry period performance and getting the year off to a good start.
6. Prioritise your well-being: Farming can be isolating, so it's essential to take breaks during the festive season. Whether it's a simple dinner out, an afternoon away from the farm with your family, or catching up with an old friend, taking time for yourself is vital for your mental health and overall well-being.

Taking these small steps now will set you up for success in the new year, giving you peace of mind and allowing you to enjoy the festive season.