

Transitioning to AMS

12-Month to Start-up Checklist

Transitioning to automatic milking systems (AMS) can be a journey that requires planning and strategic collaboration. Find valuable insights and timely considerations with Cargill's *12-Month to Start-Up Checklist*.

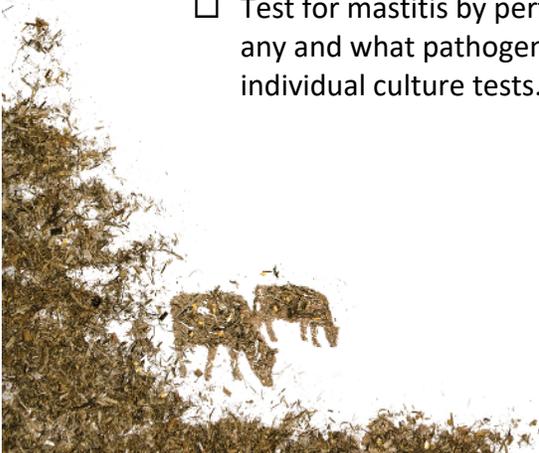
For more resources on dairy cattle nutrition and to contact a Cargill expert visit [CargillDairyDreams.com](https://www.CargillDairyDreams.com).

12 to 6 months before start-up:

- Schedule a meeting with your on-farm management team and outside advisors (i.e., veterinarians, nutritionists, breeder, and accountant) to understand goals and expectations.
- Review metrics such as current reproduction status, days in milk (DIM), and projected calving to ensure goals and targets are attainable after start-up.
- Create a hoof trimming and treatment schedule from now until start up that will prepare cows for the new or upgraded facility. Also start thinking about how hoof health will be executed after start-up.

6 to 3 months before start-up:

- Perform a herd evaluation and note any cows that may not “fit” a robot herd. Things to consider are teat placement, udder composites like ligament and suspension, and feet and legs.
- Schedule all cows a hoof trimming at 2 to 3 months before start-up and begin a foot bath protocol, or review your current protocol's results, to manage digital dermatitis (DD).
- Test for mastitis by performing a bulk tank somatic cell count (SCC) culture to identify any and what pathogens are in the herd. Hone in on cows over 250,000 SCC and take individual culture tests.



Transitioning to AMS

12-Month to Start-up Checklist

1 month before start-up:

- Prepare the barn by ensuring all construction materials are cleaned up and floors are swept for nails. Other considerations may include running a cement block to wear out sharp floor edges and housing cows or heifers in the barn to break it in.
- Prepare cows for the robot by attaching collars and activity tags, as well as clipping udder hair and tail switches.
- Dry off or cull cows you may note of due to physical attributes or mastitis. Also consider drying off any cows less than 90 days from calving. Doing this reduces the number of cows at start up and will likely reduce your initial “fetch list” as these cows may be stale and less encouraged to visit the robot.
- Solidify a feeding plan with your nutritionist that has built in checks for reviewing results and making changes when necessary.

1 week before start-up

- Start feeding herd your partial mixed ration (PMR) and top-dressing robot pellet twice per day at 5-7 days before start-up.
- Review number of people per shift and gates needed for the first few weeks to month after start-up. Try not to have more people than necessary – 1 person to map the cows, 1 or 2 people to fetch, and try to do this with 3 separate shift crews.

When looking to reduce feed cost and incorporate economical nutrition solutions turn to your nutritionist. Our team at Cargill is here to help with valuable insight on:

- ✓ Feed sampling and lab result interpretation
- ✓ Ration balancing (least cost)
- ✓ Nutrient and additive profiling
- ✓ Forage quality and kernel processing
- ✓ Calculating component efficiency
- ✓ Conducting inventory calculation
- ✓ Total Mixed Ration (TMR) audit
- ✓ Penn State Evaluation tool

