

PICK your projects: plan your outcomes

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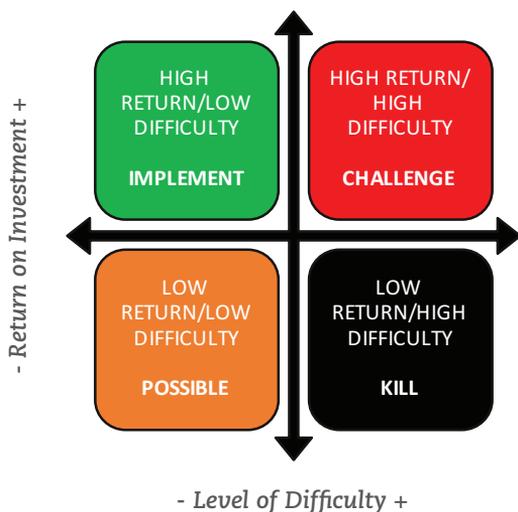
Summary

- There are many easily used tools to help decision making regardless of the size of your dairy operation.
- One tool from Lean Management, the PICK Model, simplifies the decision of where to invest resources.
- Once the PICK model has helped you decide where to invest, it is critical to carefully plan that investment to maximise the outcome.

Introduction

The **PICK Model** comes from the discipline of Lean Management and can be used to categorise potential projects for their investment potential.

The PICK Model has two axes creating four quadrants and considers the **Return on Investment** versus the **Level of Difficulty** of any task/project.



Progression of the investment depends on how it is categorised:

- **Possible** — Low Return/Low Difficulty — **Caution (orange)** → may need volume to create a return.
- **Implement** - High Return/Low Difficulty — **Best option (green)** → proceed, low hanging fruit.
- **Challenge** - High Return/High Difficulty — **Stop (red)** → needs planning and clear understanding.
- **Kill** - Low Return/High Difficulty — **NEVER attempt (black)** → haemorrhages resources.

Each farm's PICK model entries will differ depending on farmer capability, herd profile, farm size, land quality, location, business maturity and financial stability.

Planning

While the **PICK model** points out the best projects to Implement for quick wins and high impact (High Return/Low Difficulty), at certain points in every farm's lifespan there is a need to invest in High Return/High Difficulty or Challenge projects, but these carry greater risk. To reduce these greater risks, you should only start Challenge projects when you have converted them to Implement projects or as close as possible to Low Difficulty through careful planning.

Table 1. Well planned or poorly planned Challenge projects	
Farm Building	
Well Planned → Implement → Fit-for-Purpose, on-time and on-budget	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • expert advice → best location for build, best specifications, etc. • planning → finance secured, planning permission, preparation for start date in summer for continuous build, project schedules, etc. • best shed erectors. • project manager to allow farmer get on with own workload. 	
Poorly Planned → Kill → building not right, over time and over budget	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • poor or no advice → site unsuitable, poorly thought out design. • lack of planning → delayed/limited finance (cut corners), planning objections, not ready for start date, wrong time of year (calving, weather), project not managed (finish date drifts), etc. • best shed erectors not available → attempt self-build on top of daily workload. 	
Employing Staff	
Well Planned → Implement → towards Employer of Choice status	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • self-development → learning people management skills in advance. • business awareness → employee roles, work offer, employment law in place, good working conditions, etc. • planning for role → rosters definite daily finish time, holidays, etc. • timely selection → positive stress-free induction, patience, etc. 	
Poorly Planned → Kill → really struggle to attract and keep staff	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • poor people management skills. • no business awareness → undefined role & job offer, no H & S, etc. • no planning for role → no rosters, no set finish time, etc. • poorly timed selection → panic hire, stressful induction, intolerance. 	

Conclusions

For improved decision-making for on farm investment:

- apply a PICK model to possible investment opportunities on farm.
- always invest in High Return/Low Difficulty (Implement) projects.
- move High Return/High Difficulty (Challenge) projects to High Return/Low Difficulty (Implement) projects through excellent planning.