



Integrity Systems

red meat customer assurance

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Natural Disaster Response — Floods



For producers impacted by floods, human and animal health and welfare are the priorities. Managing livestock and vegetation after flooding can be challenging and stressful. Pastures can be damaged and animal health may be compromised. Careful planning can assist in preventing adverse impacts from flooding on productivity and help make recovery fast and effective.

Key actions

- » Add disaster management plan to on-farm biosecurity planning
- » Request a CVD for all purchased fodder
- » Manage property in accordance with LPA Rules & Standards
- » Check access to feed, water and shade
- » Prepare for agistment properly with inspection and research, biosecurity plan, written agreement and NLIS

Planning for adversity

To ensure your livestock are properly cared for and that the requirements of Australia's red meat integrity system continue to be met in the event of a flood, the Integrity Systems Company (ISC) provides the following guidelines. Disaster management plans can be an important component of producers' on-farm biosecurity planning. While not compulsory, they are invaluable in times of crisis and may include:

- Evacuation plans for people and livestock – including locations of where to move stock in a flood. Include a map that can be provided to others if you are not able to return.
- Plans for the purchase and storage of emergency fodder.
- Plans for the provision of safe water if infrastructure is destroyed by flooding.
- List of emergency contact details: fire brigade, local council, state department of primary industry, local vet, emergency animal disease hotline **1800 675 888**
- Ongoing management to ensure that livestock are effectively identified and that stock transfers, stock registers and livestock vaccinations are up to date.

Emergency fodder

After flooding, it is critical that nutritious feed is provided to livestock in flood affected areas. However, a flood event may compromise the availability of feed, so you may need to organise emergency fodder.

State/territory agencies, along with state farming organisations, may coordinate emergency fodder drops following natural disasters.

However, the welfare of livestock remains the responsibility of the livestock owner or their nominated representative.

When sourcing emergency fodder, exercise caution. Risks associated with purchasing from unfamiliar suppliers include chemical contamination, weed seed, restricted animal material, and poor quality or unsuitable feed for your class of livestock. Request a [Commodity Vendor Declaration \(CVD\)](#) for any purchased fodder. Keep a record of all feed that has been bought in and the animals it was fed to.

Exercise a high degree of caution before feeding livestock water-damaged fodder. Hay and silage that have been affected by water can develop mould, which drastically reduces the nutritional value of the feed, and in some cases can be toxic. More information on feeding livestock water-damaged fodder can be found on the [Agriculture Victoria website](#).

Longer term strategies may include the removal of livestock to another location where adequate food and water can be provided — such as an agistment paddock, stock route or feedlot, or the sale of livestock.

Meeting LPA requirements

The Livestock Production Assurance (LPA) program is the Australian red meat industry's on-farm assurance program underpinned by seven key elements covering food safety, animal welfare and biosecurity. If you manage your property in accordance with the [LPA Rules & Standards](#) following a flood event, there will be no issues with your LPA accreditation.

If livestock has moved to neighbouring properties, consider risks around pest, disease and biosecurity for your own property when you bring them home. LPA's [Farm Biosecurity Plan](#) template outlines recommended practices for returning livestock to your property.

Under LPA's animal welfare requirements, accredited producers must ensure animal welfare requirements are fulfilled by following the [Australia Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines](#) for cattle, sheep and/or goats (as applicable).

The *Standards and Guidelines* cover producers' responsibilities and set out animals' needs including during natural disasters including floods.

There is a checklist of activities that can assist producers in meeting the [animal welfare requirements of LPA](#).

To maintain animal welfare during floods, producers should consider the following requirements for animal treatment and animal health.

Animal treatment

Treatment for sick, injured or diseased animals must be provided at the first reasonable opportunity. Providing veterinary care for livestock following a flood may be difficult.

Treatment of animals must be in line with the *Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines* for the relevant species.

Regular monitoring of livestock is recommended, following a flood. Restrict unnecessary activity or handling while livestock are recovering. Stress can amplify other issues such as disease, so minimise additional stress. Animals that have been through a natural disaster are susceptible to parasite attack, so monitor for ticks, flies, lice, worms and nuisance insects.

Animal health

In the event of a flood, use the following checklist to reduce impact and ensure a fast recovery:

- Keep livestock away from areas that have been spoilt with floodwater from stockyards or other areas that had a high build-up of manure and urine.
- Ensure all livestock vaccinations are up to date. Clostridial diseases, such as blackleg and pulpy kidney, can increase due to bacteria commonly found in contaminated water and soil.
- If you have sheep, monitor them daily. Flystrike can be caused by wet wool and dermatitis.



- Use worm control to reduce parasite burdens in both sheep and cattle, as floods provide ideal conditions for several species to flourish. Use worm testing tools such as worm egg counts (WEC), larval cultures or the Haemonchus dipstick to develop targeted drenching and grazing programs.
- Virulent footrot often occurs in wet and warm conditions. Monitor sheep lameness.
- Three Day Sickness and Akabane may increase as populations of biting insects such as mosquitoes increase. Be alert for symptoms.
- Environmental mastitis is caused by mud and bacteria. Monitor lactating cows and ewes.
- Restrict livestock from eating toxic plants. Implement weed control.
- Inspect hay and grain for water damage or toxic mould growth as pasteurellosis, salmonellosis and botulism are bacterial diseases caused by ingesting contaminated feed or water after a flood.
- If livestock show signs of ill-thrift or illness, seek immediate advice from veterinarians or state/territory department animal health officers.
- Check fences and make sure they are stock proof to manage and ensure biosecurity is protected and livestock are kept out of areas such as dumps and old dips.
- Check for changes to your paddocks and facilities. You may need to provide shade to replace lost vegetation or structures.
- Ensure carcasses are disposed safely, which could include burial, burning or composting. Personal protective equipment (PPE) must be used, including a mask if there may be a risk of contracting Q Fever. Check with your local and state authorities for advice on appropriate carcass disposal methods and specific health risks in your area.

Use of NLIS following a flood

The NLIS database can be used to reconcile your livestock numbers and update the number of head that are on your property. Notify the database of any animals that have died on your property or if you are agisting them during flood recovery.

Agistment

Following a flood event, agistment can provide welcome relief, offering feed or safety to livestock. However, all livestock movements, especially after a natural disaster, pose an added biosecurity risk. If livestock are returned from neighbouring properties or further away in need to assess the risk of them bringing back disease or weed seed and quarantine as necessary.

Resources

- [LPA biosecurity template](#)
- [Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines](#)
- [Farm Hub website](#)

Further assistance

Further assistance is available via your State Department of Agriculture or your state farmer organisation.



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