

Natural Disaster Response — Drought

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For producers impacted by drought, human and animal health and welfare are the priorities. Managing livestock and vegetation during drought can be challenging and stressful.

Key actions

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

Animal welfare is critical when feed and water resources are under pressure, and producers must always act in a way that delivers a good animal welfare outcome, even if that means destocking. Droughts can be very difficult, but planning and management based on sound information will help producers through the experience and help speed recovery.

To ensure your livestock are properly cared for and that the requirements of Australia's red meat integrity system continue to be met during drought, Integrity Systems Company (ISC) provides the following guidelines.

Drought preparedness

Drought preparedness is integral to any farm business. These resources are available to assist and support producers in drought planning and decision making when heading into a drought:

- **More Beef from Pastures: Drought preparedness**
This checklist outlines the important issues that should be considered with drought management.
- **Managing ground cover to reduce run-off and water loss**
This provides information on seasonal management of ground cover and rotational grazing that can help avoid run-off, water loss and erosion.

Further information is available on the MLA website, see [Dealing with natural disasters - Drought Management](#).



Integrity Systems

red meat customer assurance



Caring for animals during drought

Producers should regularly monitor the health and welfare of their livestock. This includes ensuring animals have sufficient feed and water. Treatment for sick, injured or diseased animals must be provided at the first reasonable opportunity.

The effects of drought on animal health will depend on the class of livestock e.g. dry versus pregnant stock; the body condition of the livestock as they enter a period of drought; the feeding regime adopted by the producer and the length of the drought. The effects of parasites and disease may also be more pronounced with the added burden of drought.

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](#) during drought, there will be no issues with your LPA accreditation. Priorities include:

- **Animal treatment:** Treatment of livestock must be in line with the [Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines](#) which cover producers' responsibilities and set out animals' needs including during natural disasters including drought.
- **Stock foods:** While it is important to ensure animals get enough feed during drought, safe practices must be maintained to ensure animal health and the integrity of

their meat. 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 feed unsuitable for your 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.

- **Fit to load:** Livestock must be fit to load for transport. The [LPA preparation for dispatch of livestock checklist](#) and [MLA's guide Is it fit to load?](#) can help producers prepare livestock for transportation.
- **Livestock movements:** Recording livestock movements with LPA National Vendor Declarations (NVDs) and the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) ensures treatments and exposure to food safety hazards are traceable.
- **Biosecurity:** Stock owners need to be aware of the additional risks associated with introducing fodder and agisting stock during drought. LPA's [Farm Biosecurity Plan](#) template outlines recommended practices for returning livestock to your property.

Using NLIS in a drought

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 drought.

Resources

- [MLA's Drought management webpage](#)
- [MLA's Drought feeding webpage](#)
- [LPA Rules & Standards](#)
- [LPA preparation for dispatch of livestock checklist](#)
- [LPA Farm Biosecurity Plan](#)
- [Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines](#)
- [Commodity Vendor Declaration \(CVD\)](#)

Further assistance

Further assistance is available via your State Department of Primary Industries or your state farming organisation.

Integrity Systems Company Customer Service

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