



Fire recovery advice - Autumn 2017

This advice has been provided by Local Land Services as part of the ongoing collaborative recovery process to support land managers affected by the Sir Ivan fires. There is a wide range of bushfire recovery information available to support you. As well as the articles in this advice, we have provided links on our website to films and technical information that can provide more detail. You can also talk to a biosecurity officer or vet by contacting your nearest Local Land Services office for advice. Contact the Rural Assistance Authority to talk to a Rural Financial Counsellor for free and confidential financial advice.

General animal health

Feeding

Where your stock are concerned, good nutrition, protein and energy are important for healing, immunity, reproduction and growth. Our staff can provide more information about feed requirements for particular classes of stock if you need help.

Disease

Routine vaccination for clostridial diseases is very important in times of high dietary challenge. Other routine vaccinations and parasite treatments should be carried out as normal.

Diseases such as pinkeye and respiratory issues are the most commonly encountered problems in stock after fire.

Breeding

Reproductive viability of stock may need to be assessed if any animals have burned udders and vulvas in females, or prepuce and scrotums in males.

For best results, these animals need to be healthy and in good body condition before joining. Pregnancy testing or scanning is the best way to assess the success of joining.

NLIS

Deceased animal tags and tags that were burnt should be removed from the NLIS database. Talk to our staff if you have trouble making these updates.

Toxic weeds

Keep an eye out for any unusual weeds that may be toxic to stock. Rockfern, Darling pea and cat's head are a few examples of problematic weeds that have a history of thriving after fire events. Contact your Local Land Services office if you are having trouble identifying weeds.

Quarantine and biosecurity

Quarantine is very important when you are buying replacement stock or your stock is returning from agistment. Animal health issues that arise from agistment could include:

- resistant parasites
- Johne's disease
- footrot
- lice.

The best practice is to keep the animals in the same mob and don't mix them with others for a quarantine period. A quarantine drench on arrival is advised, followed by a drench check 14 days later.

Stock away on agistment should be monitored for any health issues by careful observation and a veterinary examination and advice when needed.

Financial assistance and advice

You may be eligible for financial assistance, including grants and loans, to help you recover from the effects of the Sir Ivan fires.

For information visit the Rural Assistance Authority at www.raa.nsw.gov.au or call **1800 678 593**.

For free and confidential financial advice is also available from the Rural Financial Counselling Service. Phone **1800 940 404** or visit www.rfscr.com.au.

This advice is provided by Local Land Services to support landholders recovering from bushfire damage.

For more support or advice contact your nearest Local Land Services office or ring our freecall number on **1300 795 299**.

Resilience support available

*Liane Corocher, Coordinator Rural Resilience Program
NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI)*

Mother nature has certainly provided some challenges for farmers over the past nine months—from Central West floods, to the Sir Ivan fire and the North Coast floods. Our thoughts are with everyone who has been impacted by all these 'natural' disasters.

The individual impacts on farmers and communities and their recovery needs can be very different as a result of these disasters. This is why staff are working with all these communities and will continue to provide recovery support over the coming months.

It can be easy to think that others are worse off and need support, however please remember that there are staff available from DPI's Rural Resilience Program to help with everything from looking after yourself and your neighbours to reviewing your farm financials.

DPI Rural Support Workers

Caroline Hayes 0407 971 675

Susan Freebairn 0427 212 368

Feed quality tests

*Brett Littler, Senior Land Services Officer (Livestock)
Central Tablelands Local Land Services*

With a large number of people buying and receiving feed for stock, it's important to test for quality so you know what you are dealing with. There can even be large variations in the quality of home-grown feed from one season to the next.

I have seen large variations in a range of feed stuffs recently, with protein levels varying from 28 to 43 per cent in one instance when cottonseed meal was tested.

It is particularly important that you know what you are dealing with when you are trying to balance a feed ration and need to lift the protein concentration for some younger stock.

Otherwise, you could be considerably over or under-feeding stock, with significant costs and animal health consequences.

Feed test costs are worth the money

The money that you spend on a feed test is a small cost, but it can have a huge benefit. When you know what you are feeding, you can make an educated decision on how much feed is needed for best results.

Over many years I have been called in to investigate why animals are underperforming when they have been fed. Usually the first thing I do is send the feed for testing. If you have a test, there are no nasty surprises and you can ensure you are feeding the correct amount and also know what additives are needed.

Feed quality tests are available from your Local Land Services offices and we have a number of staff who can interpret these results and fine tune the feeding of your livestock for best results.



What to do with green pick

*Brett Littler, Senior Land Services Officer (Livestock)
Central Tablelands Local Land Services*

With rain falling in some areas since the bushfires, we have seen paddocks transformed and fresh green feed spring up. Livestock performance on this green pick can be extremely variable and this is all down to one thing—height.

The fresh green pick is great quality. It is very high in digestibility and protein. Livestock performance on this feed should be great, as long as they are able to eat enough of it. The height of this green pick is what will dictate if the livestock can consume enough to meet their needs or if they will spend their entire day 'chasing the green pick' without meeting their minimum nutritional requirements.

What height should green pick be?

There are differences between different classes and type of stock, but the general rule to meet daily nutritional requirements is:

- above three centimetres for sheep
- above five centimetres for cattle.

If stock are forced to chase this green pick, their condition will drop dramatically and this can have a number of health implications.

Careful management is needed to ensure that some of these issues don't have lasting implications on reproduction. Worms and clostridial diseases need to be considered, so talk to your local vet for advice.

While chasing green pick, stock also tend to go off any grain you might be feeding them. If they then come back onto the grain after a few days, this can lead to serious problems with gorging and grain poisoning.

Follow basic stock movement rules

When green pick is available, it is also important to follow some of the basic rules of moving and introducing stock.

- Don't put hungry stock on a new paddock. Fill them up with hay first.
- If you are going to move stock, do so later in the day and not first thing in the morning when stock are hungry.
- When you move stock, monitor them for the first few days so you can take action if issues arise.

Stock water requirements

Brett Littler, Senior Land Services Officer (Livestock)
Central Tablelands Local Land Services

Whenever we talk about stock management, the conversation centres on water requirements of stock, including trough size and design. The main question we hear is 'How much water do I need for my stock?'. Our response will almost always be the same: 'It depends'.

The amount of water that different classes of stock need depends on many things, including:

- the time of year
- air temperature
- temperature of the water
- salt content of the water
- type of feed
- stage of growth of the feed
- size of the animal
- whether or not it is lactating.

Use this table as a guide:

Stock type	Litres per head per day
Weaner sheep	Up to four
Adult dry sheep	Up to six
Ewes with lambs	Up to 10
Lactating cows	Up to 100
Weaner cattle	Up to 50
Yearling cattle	Up to 80
Horses	Up to 50

Trough space

The amount of water trough space needed will also depend on a number of variables, including:

- the size of the animals
- the number of animals
- type of livestock
- trough design.

There should be enough trough space to allow 10 per cent of animals to drink at one time. Generally speaking, allow:

- sheep: 15 cm of trough space each
- cows/steers: 40 cm of trough space each
- 100 sheep: 0.5 m of trough length
- 100 cattle: 4 m of trough length.

Water flow rate

Another important aspect of setting up a stock water system is the flow rate. Use these minimums as a guide:

- 21 litres per minute for sheep
- 42 litres per minute for cattle.
- higher flow rate for lactating animals.

The flow rate is very important as it allows the water to replenish quickly and livestock should be able to come in and get a drink without having to wait for water.

Stock health reminders

Sheep need ongoing assessment for body condition, hoof damage, breeding suitability and fly strike where skin damage has occurred.

Health checklist for lambing ewes

- Damaged teats can scar over and lead to lamb deaths. Check before lambing.
- Maintain body condition/fat score to maximise reproductive potential.
- Provide mineral supplementation on fodder crops to prevent lambing difficulties and rickets in lambs.
- Vaccinate, especially as green feed becomes available, using 5 in 1 as a minimum.

Health checklist for rams

- Scrotal palpation for scarring and adhesions if burnt (infertility from high heat events can last six weeks or more).
- Body condition/fat score.
- Mobility can be affected with hoof damage.
- Vaccination.

Health checks for cattle

Cattle can be similarly affected. Check for teat damage before calving. Heifers should be checked before joining. Sell any with significant damage for slaughter.

Bulls should undergo a physical assessment, including scrotal palpation for scarring and checking of the pizzle. Fat score and body condition for both cows and bulls needs to be optimum for reproduction and rejoining of cows.

Vaccinate with 7 in 1 for cows and add vibriosis for bulls, especially with animals that have been agisted. Livestock on green feed, especially fodder crops, need regular boosters with 5 in 1 to avoid pulpy kidney/enterotoxaemia (maybe up to every two months). Animals that have been on agistment may have been exposed to diseases such as pestivirus. Talk to your vet about vaccinations and testing.



What's germinating in your pastures?

Clare Edwards, Senior Land Services Officer (Pastures)
Central Tablelands Local Land Services

Across the area we have seen some interesting pasture recovery following the rains. In fire-affected areas, where the burn was not too hot, some of the perennial grass plants have been able to recover using energy reserves stored in their root systems.

Many of the native perennials, such as wiregrass and redgrass, have put out green leaf. In some areas, there has also been a germination of summer species as the soil temperature remains warm. These include species such as liverseed, barnyard and windmill grasses, as well as the Eragrostis species like African lovegrass, stinkgrass, and the native lovegrasses.

Unfortunately, some broadleaf species have been quick off the mark as well. These include caltrop/cat head, tar vine, khaki weed, blue heliotrope and bathurst burrs to name a few.

It has been interesting to also see the cool season annual species germinating, such as the medics and sub clover. As 2016 was a good year for many of these species, the seed population in some areas where it wasn't too hot a burn has survived quite well.

There are also some annual broad leaf plants that have taken the opportunity to germinate while there has been a lack of competition as well. Patersons curse, capeweed and thistles are all in earlier stages of growth. Some of the lighter country may also see rockfern.

Knowing what has survived and what is germinating is important for grazing but also for managing and considering priority paddocks for pasture or crop sowing in the future.

Other areas to check for what is germinating include around feed out areas, silos, hay and silage storage areas and previous areas that you may have used for feeding. This is a job to do now, again in the spring and later when the soil temperature warms up in summer.

If you are unsure what you have, we are always happy to help in identifying a plant. Sometimes it is a little difficult without a seed head or flower, but in terms of managing potential weeds, it is best to get it identified before it becomes a problem. Either take a sample and drop it into your nearest Local Land Services office in a sealed bag or send a digital photo of your problem plant by email or as a text message for a Land Services Officer to identify.

Your annual land and stock return—crucial for emergency response

Annual Land and Stock Return (ALSR) information is an important tool for Local Land Services—not only to manage biosecurity threats, but also to respond to emergencies.

The information you provide means Local Land Services staff can quickly respond during bushfires, floods, severe storms and other emergencies.

Recent emergency events locally and across the state highlight the value of submitting your ALSR, regardless of whether you have stock or not.

In the Sir Ivan fires, staff were able to combine ALSR data with live fire data provided by the Rural Fire Services.

This allowed response teams to quickly identify which properties on the fire front carried stock. The ALSR data also showed the number and mix of animals.

This meant rapid assessment of expected animal welfare issues and the scale of support required.

Having access to this information allowed staff to confidently provide updates to land managers, the Rural Fire Service and the Department of Primary Industries.

Ultimately, ALSR data meant staff could work in the right areas for a better animal welfare response.

Useful resources for bushfire recovery

A series of resources is available for bushfire-affected landholders. To access these, visit the website below or scan the QR code* below with your smart device. To use the code, download a QR-scanning app to your device (these are available for free), then simply point your phone's camera at the squiggly code on the right and it will take you direct to the page on our website. Information includes:

Guide to common sheep vaccines

Water requirements for sheep and cattle

Feed tests

Fire recovery video series

- Management advice
- Pasture management
- Our role in bushfire recovery.



Available from <http://www.lls.nsw.gov.au/emergency/bushfires/bushfire-recovery-resources>

* Please note that some QR code readers may show advertising. This is outside our control.