



Available drought assistance in New South Wales

www.droughthub.nsw.gov.au

Rural Assistance Authority 1800 678 593

On July 30 2018, the NSW Government announced a \$500 million Emergency Drought Relief Package to help farmers manage the effects of the current drought. Measures include:

Drought Transport Subsidy

A transport subsidy of \$20 000 per eligible farm business per year equating to up to \$30 000 over 18 months from 1 January 2018 to 30 June 2019. The subsidy is back-dated so farmers can apply it for freight expenses incurred since 1 January 2018. It covers 50 per cent of the full cost of freight up to a maximum of \$5 per km and 1500 km per journey.

Waiver of NSW Local Land Services rates

All LLS rates, including General Rates and Rates for Animal Health & Pests, the Meat Industry Levy, and costs of Routine Stock Moving Permit and Stock Identification will be waived for 2019. Contact Local Land Services for information on 1300 795 299.

Rebate on fixed charges for water licences

A rebate of up to \$4000 per licence will apply to the fixed component of bills for general security licence holders (and supplementary water access licence holders) in rural and regional NSW across surface and ground water systems, and to customers of Irrigation Corporation Districts for water entitlement costs incurred. Contact WaterNSW for information on 1300 662 077.

Waiver of Class 1 agricultural vehicle registration

Class 1 agricultural vehicles will be exempt from the next annual registration charge. Contact ServiceNSW for information on 13 22 13

Waiver of Farm Innovation Fund interest charges

All existing Farm Innovation Fund customers, and all applicants who submitted an application on or before 30 July 2018, will have applicable interest charges for the 2017/18 financial year and 2018/19 financial year refunded and waived.

Financial assistance

Farm Innovation Fund

A loan scheme for capital works to a value of \$250 000 (e.g. sheds, silos, water storage) for infrastructure works to prepare for dry conditions, to be more resilient and improve on-farm efficiency.

Drought Assistance Fund

A one-off \$50 000 interest free loan to transport stock, fodder and water; genetic banking of breeding herds and installing on-farm fodder and water infrastructure. Seven year interest free repayment terms. No repayment required in the first two years.

Transport of Donated Fodder

100 per cent of the cost of transporting donated fodder is available to transport providers acting in conjunction with community groups taking donated fodder from within NSW to drought affected properties—up to a maximum of \$5 per km within 1500 km.

Animal Welfare Transport Subsidy

A subsidy of up to 50 per cent of eligible costs for the permanent transport of stock off a farm which is facing financial hardship and where livestock are at fat score two or below (dairy cattle three or below), to a maximum of \$20 000 per financial year.

Farm Business Skills Professional Development Program

A subsidy of up to 50 per cent of eligible costs for an approved course or activity, with a maximum reimbursement of \$5000 per farmer and \$9000 per farm business.

Farm Debt Mediation

A structured negotiation process where an accredited, independent mediator helps the farmers and their creditors to negotiate and reach agreements about farm business debt. Farmers can negotiate their farm business debt with their lender at any time and don't have to be in default or hardship. New farm debt mediation videos provide valuable information on the mediation process and aim to empower farmers to negotiate more effectively, in a fair and efficient way.

Farm Household Allowance

Income support for eligible farmers and their partners for up to three years, as well as planning and training for long-term financial improvements, including: Income support allowance, a dedicated case management to help develop a plan for the future and address challenges facing the business and household, up to \$1500 to carry out a financial assessment of their farm enterprise, and ongoing support from the Rural Financial Counselling Service. Call 132 316 for more.

Drought Communities Program

Additional \$75 million from the Australian Government to help support an initial 60 Councils in drought-stricken areas, funding local community infrastructure and other projects, such as emergency water supply.

Taxation measure

Primary producers can immediately deduct (rather than depreciate over three years) the cost of fodder storage assets, such as silos and hay sheds used to store grain and other animal feed storage, making it easier for farmers to invest in and stockpile fodder.

Low-interest loans

\$2 million in Australian Government funding to increase the total amount available a farmer can borrow in low-interest loans for these loans to \$500 million in any one year to \$500 million in any one year. These loans will assist with financing immediate needs such as purchasing feed and fodder. The first five years of these loans will remain interest only. Farmers with existing government loans will also be able to refinance to take advantage of the interest-only concessional period.

Water Infrastructure Development Fund

The Australian Government will invest \$72 million under the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund for water infrastructure in drought-affected areas.

Bureau of Meteorology

An additional \$2.7 million to develop new finer scale regional weather and climate guides, helping farmers make decisions about crop planting and stocking levels by better understanding their local climate risks.

Great Artesian Basin bore capping program

An additional \$23.7 million to improve drought resilience by extending the Great Artesian Basin bore capping program that plugs abandoned bores and replaces free running channels with new water-efficient piping.

Regional Investment Corporation Drought Assistance

The Australian Government offers low interest loans for farmers to manage their business risks and to prepare for, manage through and recover from drought.

<http://www.ric.gov.au>

Farm Management Deposits

The scheme helps producers deal effectively with cash flow fluctuations by building up cash reserves to meet their business costs in low-income years. Eligible producers

can set aside pre-tax income from primary production in years of high income, which can be drawn on in future years.

www.agriculture.gov.au/ag-farm-food/drought/assistance/fmd

Support and advice

Drought Hub

A one-stop online destination for information on services and support available to primary producers, their families and communities to prepare for and manage drought conditions.

www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/drougthub

Local Land Services

Local Land Services staff provide farmers with on the ground support and advice on animal nutrition, pasture management and livestock health. Local Land Services are also running drought information sessions across NSW and can connect farmers with other specialists.

www.lls.nsw.gov.au

Drought Feed Calculator

A mobile app to help farmers make decisions and save money by determining the minimum feed requirement for different livestock, and compare the value of different feeds or a mixed ration. The app covers 71 different feeds and calculates: The amount of feed needed per head, the cost per head, the cost for a period, the amount of feed needed for a mob/herd, and the total cost for a mob/herd.

Free to download from the iOS App Store or Android Google Play

Rural Resilience Program

A team dedicated to building the personal and business resilience of farming communities by listening to concerns and collaborating with partners to address these. They make sure farmers connect with each other through events, facilitate useful learning opportunities and improve farmers' access to information and services they may need. The program includes Rural Resilience Officers and Rural Support Workers that cover the state.

www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/about-us/rural-support/rural-resilience-program

Rural Financial Counselling Service

Rural financial counsellors help farmers who are dealing with, or are at risk of, financial hardship. Rural financial counsellors can:

- » Help identify producers' financial and business options, including negotiating with lenders
- » Help producers develop an action plan
- » Help producers access the Farm Household Allowance (FHA)
- » Give producers information about government and other assistance schemes
- » Refer producers to accountants, agricultural advisers and educational services
- » Refer producers to Department of Human Services and to professionals for succession planning, family mediation and personal, emotional and social counselling.

www.agriculture.gov.au/ag-farm-food/drought/assistance/rural-financial-counselling-service

Charity coordination

GIVIT

The NSW Government has announced an official partnership with not-for-profit GIVIT, to manage offers of assistance for farmers, their families and rural communities experiencing hardship due to the current drought. By working with hundreds of local charities, schools and community service providers, GIVIT will ensure donations are matched with the people for whom they will do the most good. One hundred per cent of money received by GIVIT is supporting drought affected communities, families and individuals. GIVIT does not charge an administration fee and is committed to purchasing locally wherever possible to support devastated communities.

<http://givit.org.au>

