

Lifestyle and small block owners



Plan to get through winter and early spring

Drought and the effects of Covid-19 restrictions have created feed pressure for livestock owners in many regions. There is help available to work through these issues and maintain the welfare of your animals.

1. Make sure you have enough feed

Make a feed plan

Plan now to make sure your animals will have enough feed to get through to spring. Animals will need more feed depending on growth, pregnancy, lactation and weather conditions.

Call the free winter feed planning service to identify your needs and talk through the options. This service is open to all stock owners, from lifestyle blocks to the largest stations, anywhere in New Zealand. You do not have to be drought affected. Call now:

- 0800 BEEFLAMB (0800 23 33 52)
- 0800 4 DairyNZ (0800 43 24 79 69)

Feed co-ordination

If you are running out of feed choices, try the feed co-ordination service sooner rather than later. Four co-ordinators are set up nationally to help connect people who need feed with available feed sources. The first step in this service is to make a feed plan.

Register through the 0800 numbers above, or through this webpage: www.mpi.govt.nz/drought

You can also email the feed co-ordinators at: drought&feed@beeflambnz.co.nz

Another way to source feed is through online communities such as your local farmer or lifestyle Facebook groups.

Supplementary feed

If your plan shows you need supplementary feed, such as hay or grain, to maintain your animals over winter, place an order with a feed supplier as soon as possible. It may take a while to arrive.

What are my options if I can't get feed for my horse?

- Check your local feed supplier.
- You may be able to find available feed or grazing through a friend with horses, your veterinarian, a local equine Facebook group or your local pony club.
- Contact the local SPCA – they may be able to assist.
- Your local showgrounds or racing club might have grazing available. Or consider looking for grazing outside your local area.
- Contact a feed co-ordinator – they may be able to assist with information on feed availability or grazing in your area.

Animals need to be gradually introduced to supplementary feeds, so they can adapt to it and to prevent digestive problems such as lactic acidosis or grain overload. Talk to your veterinarian or feed supplier to get advice on the best feed for your animals and situation.

More guidance on supplementary feed can be found here: www.far.org.nz/articles/1331/feeding-grain-to-sheep

2. Think about whether you need to reduce stock numbers

Your stocking rate needs to be low enough that there is enough pasture to feed the number of animals on it. Overstocking means animals don't get the nutrition they need and can cause animal welfare problems. Bringing in supplementary feed may help, or you may need to make decisions to reduce the number of animals you have on your property. Below are some options to consider.

Selling

It is usually more cost-effective to sell animals than to buy feed in. If you wait too long, your stock may become unsaleable. You could try selling through a stock agent, farmer, or through online sites.

Meat processors

Contact your local processing plant or agent as early as possible to check what their protocols and current wait times are. Some meat processors will allow you to bring your own stock by trailer, but others may only accept them via commercial transport operators. There may be longer wait times if you have small numbers of stock, or don't already have a relationship with the meat company.

You could try working with your neighbours to develop solutions, such as combining stock numbers from a number of properties and utilising their relationships with meat companies.

MPI registered homekill operators

Your local homekill butcher may be able to kill and process your animals. This service is available to people who want to keep the meat for their own or their family's consumption or use. You won't be able to trade (sell) the meat you get back from the homekill operator.

MPI maintains a list of homekill service providers here: www.foodsafety.govt.nz/registers-lists/service-providers/index.htm

Petfood operators

Petfood operators may also be able to kill and process your animals. Contact your local petfood operator to see what services they can offer: www.petfoodnz.co.nz/directory.htm

On-farm euthanasia

As a last resort, you may need to have your animal euthanised. This can be a difficult decision. On-farm euthanasia can only be done by experienced operators that are trained and have the competency and skills to carry this out safely and humanely.

The best option is to talk with your veterinarian, a homekill service provider, or other appropriate commercial operator. If you think you want/need to undertake it yourself, contact the relevant industry for training courses and advice, e.g. Beef+Lamb NZ, DairyNZ.

Codes of welfare provide legal minimum standards for doing it right: www.mpi.govt.nz/welfarecodes

Disposing of dead stock

Decomposing animals can carry diseases that affect human and animal health. They must be disposed of quickly to avoid contamination of waterways, or contact with remaining stock on your property.

The disposal of dead stock on farms is regulated at the local government level. Contact your regional council to find out what rules apply. If you are unable to deal with the carcass yourself you may be able to call in a support service to help deal with the animal on farm.

Further guidance is available here: www.dairynz.co.nz/environment/waste-management/dead-stock-disposal

3. Be aware of your obligations

The welfare of your animals is your legal responsibility. Check out the codes of welfare to find out about minimum standards and recommended best practices when caring for your animals:

www.mpi.govt.nz/welfarecodes

For guidance on animal welfare regulations, visit:

www.mpi.govt.nz/animalregs

For more advice on how to look after your animals in dry or drought conditions and other emergencies, visit:

www.mpi.govt.nz/getstockthru

4. Don't hesitate to ask for help

- Talk to **neighbours or farmers** you're close to in your community. They may have extra feed or space for stock. They may have useful advice or a recommended professional to help find solutions.
- Join the **lifestyle block community** – you'll find help and support through online/community groups for lifestyle/small block holders. The Lifestyle Block website has a forum where you can share experiences and ask advice: www.lifestyleblock.co.nz/forum
- Your **veterinarian** can help develop a feed plan, provide nutritional advice, undertake pregnancy testing and body condition scoring to assist decision-making, advise on animal welfare issues, create animal health plans, and advise or assist with humane culling where required.
- For animal welfare advice or assistance contact **Ministry for Primary Industries** on **0800 00 83 33**, or email: animalwelfare@mpi.govt.nz
- These organisations have people who understand the challenges and can provide advice:
 - **Federated Farmers: 0800 327 646**
 - **Beef + Lamb NZ: 0800 733 466**
 - **DairyNZ: 0800 4 324 7969**
- Need to talk? Call or text **1737** or visit: www.allright.org.nz/campaigns/getting-together
- **Healthline: 0800 611 116**
- For financial support options visit: www.workandincome.govt.nz or phone **0800 559 009**, or call Inland Revenue on **0800 473 566**.

