Climate positive
Nature positive
Factsheet

For future drought & adverse events

Landholder reflections on **Drought preparedness and management**

Healthy Land & Water

Landholder reflections on drought preparedness and management

Feedback from local drought & climate adaptation workshops in 2021 revealed a measurable increase in awareness and understanding of climate drivers, drought impacts, future climate risks, and adaptation responses among landholders following workshops.

Post-workshop surveys also revealed a measurable increase in landholders' confidence and capacity in using climate information and tools, assessing risks, and implementing drought and climate management strategies and actions.

Landholders attending workshops were asked to reflect on drought preparedness, management, and recovery.

Did you know **most program participants** seek out education information **from podcasts and YouTube?**

Responses to the question ***what works well?*** are listed below.

Climate & weather information	**Improving water & property infrastructure**
• Stay ahead of weather events using forecasting tools. • Use apps to learn about forecast weather.	• Increase on-farm water storage capacity- cleaned /expanded dams. • Develop irrigation to grow fodder. • Build hayshed to store more fodder. • Erected shade shelters.
Grazing & livestock management	**Pasture & fodder management**
• Reduce stock numbers early when signs of drought appear. • Run less stock - don't push the landscape. • Use rotational cell grazing and forage budgeting to reduce stock numbers early. • Employ best practice grazing management to manage feed and pasture growth, quality, and palatability. • Cull older, unproductive stock early to reduce pressure on the landscape. • Early weaning. • Supplementary feeding - started early to maintain stock condition. • Destock and not re-stocking too quickly after break to allow recovery.	• Using fodder budgeting – manage available pasture feed. • Grow your own forage – less reliance and pressure on native pasture. • Let your paddock spell/rest to allow best pastures to recover and set seed. • Use more stored feed, like hay and silage, to manage livestock requirements all year round. • Purchase and store feed when readily available and cheap. • Forced to look at alternative drought feed options.

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Management & mindset	Land management
• Engage government agencies to identify what support is available after major events like drought and flood. • Use a flexible management style to address issues as they arise. • Be willing to change. • Regularly monitor cattle prices. • Not being totally reliant on farming income.	• Increase ground cover. • Slash to remove old pasture growth (unpalatable/rank not profitable). • Encourage and promote new growth, species, and ground cover. • Fire management – slash and mow fire breaks in high-risk areas. • Use a designated sacrifice paddock for bought in feed/hay to minimize the impact of introduced weed species. • Manage weeds in time of drought. • Improve soil health. • Plant improved pasture species to provide more feed and growing season than native pasture species.

Workshop attendees were then asked to reflect on **what they would do differently to prepare for, manage, and recover from drought in the future**. Responses are listed below.

Stay informed of climate & weather events	Improving water & property management
• Use available climate information and forecasts for better long-term decision making. • Look into climate and weather forecasts to reduce stock numbers sooner. • Utilise heatwave forecasting information to manage risks to crops.	• Investment more in water infrastructure – safe and clean water supply for stock. • Improve irrigation system efficiency. • Create off-stream water points to reduce stock pressure on dams, creeks. • Purchase more tanks. • Develop more cultivation for growing fodder. • Create more paddocks to allow stock rotation.
Grazing & livestock management	**Pasture & fodder management**
• Destock earlier despite falling livestock prices. • Sell livestock earlier. • Reduce stock numbers earlier. • Early weaning to preserve breeder condition and cost efficiencies. • Better monitoring and management of stock numbers based on seasonal forage. • Select more resilient and adaptable livestock and genetics.	• Have more hay in the shed. • Produce more silage. • Grow more fodder crops and store while season conditions are available. • Have a sacrifice paddock for drought feeding. • Monitor pastures more closely. • Use the Green Date and forage budgets to ensure feed supply through dry season. • Improve pasture condition – rotation and spelling. • Look at growing more improved pastures. • Improving legumes in pastures to improve feed quality and condition.
Planning - Be prepared	**Take advantage of available support**
• Develop a property management and drought management plan. ' • Plan for business risks. • Build skills in forecasting and forage budgeting to maintain confidence courage in decisions.	• Seek assistance as to what financial or management assistance is available (government and Landcare agencies). • Direct other landholders/neighbours to attend workshops and available resources.
Build resilience knowledge base: Identify areas of interest	**Land management**
• Soil health. • Grazing management. • Weeds and pest management (Buffalo Fly). • Erosion control. • Fire management. • Riparian management. • Property planning. • Vegetative management. • Better predictability in climate forecasting and use of climate tools.	• Look at enterprise mix – livestock and cropping. • Maintain improved groundcover to maximise infiltration. • Change use of farm fertiliser and move to more organic base products to promote soil health. • Growing multi-species cover crops to improve soil health and drought resilience. • Check hay and fodder for weed seeds. • Plant more long-lived trees.

Key learnings to improve drought preparedness, management & resilience

- Have a plan that considers climate and drought risks, past experiences, and adaptation strategies and actions for your property/business.
- Fully utilise available climate information and set critical dates for better decision making.
- Maintain your soils, pastures, and land in good condition to improve resilience and recovery.
- Maintain high levels of effective groundcover all year round to maximise infiltration, reduce erosion, maintain efficient micobial activity, and nutrient cyling.
- Improve water infrastructure to maximise water storage capacity and system efficiencies for irrigation and livestock.
- Improve opportunities to conserve fodder and/or store additional livestock feed in good seasons.
- Maintain farm biosecurity measures and prioritise weed and pest control during drought.
- Maintain the health and welfare of livestock at all times.
- During drought seek out assistance and advice – don't self-assess.
- Stay connected and look after yourself, family, friends, and neighbours

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