

Extremely dry conditions

INFORMATION AND TOOLS

Water Restrictions

Dry conditions are experienced from time to time across the State. For example, farmers may experience this through stream flows in a number of catchments that could remain at or below summer restriction levels.

Farmers can look to the Bureau of Meteorology rainfall forecasts <http://www.bom.gov.au/jsp/watl/rainfall/pme.jsp?ref=fr> to consider what the rainfall forecast might mean for their property.

Lack of rain could have a direct impact on planning for the next season crops along with an inability to immediately commence filling storages.

The [Department's Dry Conditions Policy](#)¹ was released in 2015. This Policy is aimed at the equitable sharing of water amongst all users by allowing some flexibility in the management of stream flows.

This policy may allow some flexibility in managing winter restrictions to ensure river flows

are kept at or above restriction levels:

- The use of minimum restriction trigger values with careful monitoring of river conditions
or
- Rostering allocations amongst catchment communities to allow equitable sharing on a needs by needs basis
or
- Rationing of daily extractions.

Any changes to current restriction protocols will be communicated to farmers directly by DPIPW E.

DPIPWE staff will be on the ground to help licence holders meet their obligations. The focus will be on education to encourage compliant behavior.

DPIPWE will work with catchment communities with the aim of the sharing of the available water resource as equitably as possible.

Where winter restrictions will need to be placed, affected irrigators will be notified by SMS. Restrictions will be posted at www.farmpoint.tas.gov.au

Tasmanian irrigation provides monthly updates to all clients on water availability for its Schemes. This information is available at www.tasmanianirrigation.com.au.

PLANNING

As farmers move into the winter water take period, many irrigators will be focused on taking their allocations into storages for summer irrigation.

This is the time to determine what water will be required and whether it is available. Reviewing previous seasons' water use can be helpful in calculating future water needs.

DPIPWE has prepared **The Making The Most of Your Water Factsheets**² that provide information and tools to assist in planning water requirements.

¹ <http://dipwe.tas.gov.au/water-site/Pages/Water-Resource-Management-During-Extreme-Dry-Conditions.aspx>

² <http://dipwe.tas.gov.au/water/water-licences/making-the-most-of-your-water-factsheets>

DPIPWE also provides information on river flows³ for 80 locations across the State that are updated every three hours. By keeping an eye on your river flows, you may be able to predict when irrigation restrictions occur and manage them accordingly.

Water for Profit

To help maximise your returns from investment in irrigation, go to www.utas.edu.au/tia/water-for-profit for free tools and tips.

Tools

Managing a farming business in dry conditions can be challenging. Knowing where to get information and tools is critical.

DPIPWE provides one central point of farm management decision tools at

www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au/seasonal.

Tactical risk management tools include:

- Managing water
- Livestock alerts
- Cost of production calculators
- Feed tests (you can save money)

- Feed budget tables
- Managing native pastures
- Gross margin tools for different crops
- Spraying decisions
- Weed management information.

Strategic risk management tools include:

- Fact sheets on farm business management checklists.
- Decision tools on farm business management checklists.
- Planning for challenging seasonal conditions.

Feed and Fodder Register

The Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association (TFGA) have established an online fodder register www.tasfodder.com.au to connect farmers who wish to buy and sell stock feed. There is also information in the resource area of the site on Tasmanian pasture and field crops which can allow farmers to forward plan and pick the right plant for their individual situations.

Animal Welfare

In times of extremely dry conditions and reduced pasture, there may be extra challenges in maintaining healthy animals.

However, under the *Tasmanian Animal Welfare Act 1993*, there are many classes of people deemed to be responsible for the welfare of animals. This means that in addition to the owner, other people have some responsibility if they have animals on agistment or loan, if they are livestock carrier or livestock agents or if they have animals in their care in any other way.

The Act applies to all animals whether they are pets or livestock.

If you are concerned about maintaining your animals then you will need to source extra feed or sell them. Information is available at DPIPWE⁴ and ⁵.

If you are concerned about an animal's welfare you should report it to the RSPCA on 1300 139 947 or email rspca@rspca.tas.org.au

³ www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au/water/water-data/understanding-river-flow-plots

⁴ <https://agencyweb.dpipwe.tas.gov.au/biosecurity-tasmania/animal-biosecurity/animal-welfare>

⁵ <https://dpipwe.tas.gov.au/biosecurity-tasmania/animal-biosecurity/animal-welfare>