



*Galloway family, Monto*

THE AGFORCE AND  
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITIES

# DROUGHT NEWSLETTER

February / March 2019

*Important information for  
primary producers*



Funded by



## Message from AgForce General President *Georgie Somerset*

**IT HAS BEEN** a punishing start to 2019 for primary producers around Queensland.

Graziers in the northwest, who had nursed herds through so many years of drought, watched in horror as the first promising rains for many years quickly turned to tragedy.

As we watched this disaster unfold, we were heartened by the acknowledgement and support of Federal and State governments, your peak bodies, fellow primary producers, and people across Australia who have rallied to support farmers who have lost so much – in many cases, everything.

We have worked, as an industry, to help governments and the community understand the scale of the disaster and commit to the intensive assistance that will be required over many years to support the northern cattle industry to rebuild.

However, despite these record floods, most of Queensland remains in drought. A new challenge for agriculture

is ensuring that the commendable support for those affected by floods does not come at the expense of thousands of droughted producers, many of whom are entering their eighth year without meaningful rain.

I'd like to personally assure these producers that you are not forgotten, even if it sometimes appears from the media that this is the case.

AgForce and others are devoted to highlighting your critical situation to governments of all levels, and pressing for urgent and ongoing financial, health, and community support. There is no doubt that agriculture can be a challenging, sometimes heart-breaking, way of life.

We pride ourselves on our resilience, our ability to laugh in the face of adversity, to pick ourselves up after a disaster and get on with it. But none of us is bullet-proof.

The financial, physical and emotional burden of surviving drought is incremental and ongoing – sometimes it can sneak up on you without you even realising it.



The most important thing is your health, and that of yourself, your family, your friends, and your community. Keep an eye on each other and keep checking in – sometimes a phone call or a drop in is all it takes.

The back of this newsletter lists a range of organisations that can assist during tough times. If you think you may benefit from their free, confidential services, I'd encourage you to call or email them.

Please stay strong and ask for a hand if you need it. We in agriculture are an amazing family. If we continue to support each other, we will make it through, as we always have.

# Instant depreciation for fodder storage assets

**A CHANGE MADE** to depreciation rules last year will not only assist drought-stricken producers now but will support the proactive steps farmers take to prepare for drought.

Since August 2018, farmers have been able to immediately access tax relief on the cost of fodder storage assets rather than depreciating them over three years.

This announcement complements the \$20,000 instant write-off available to small business.

However, unlike the small business write-off, there is no dollar cap on the cost of fodder storage assets that can be instantly depreciated by farmers.

## **What is classified as 'Fodder Storage Asset'?**

A fodder storage asset is an asset that is primarily and principally for the purpose of storing fodder.

A fodder storage asset can be a structural improvement, a repair of a capital nature, or an alteration, addition or extension, to an asset or structural improvement, that is primarily and principally for the purpose of storing fodder.

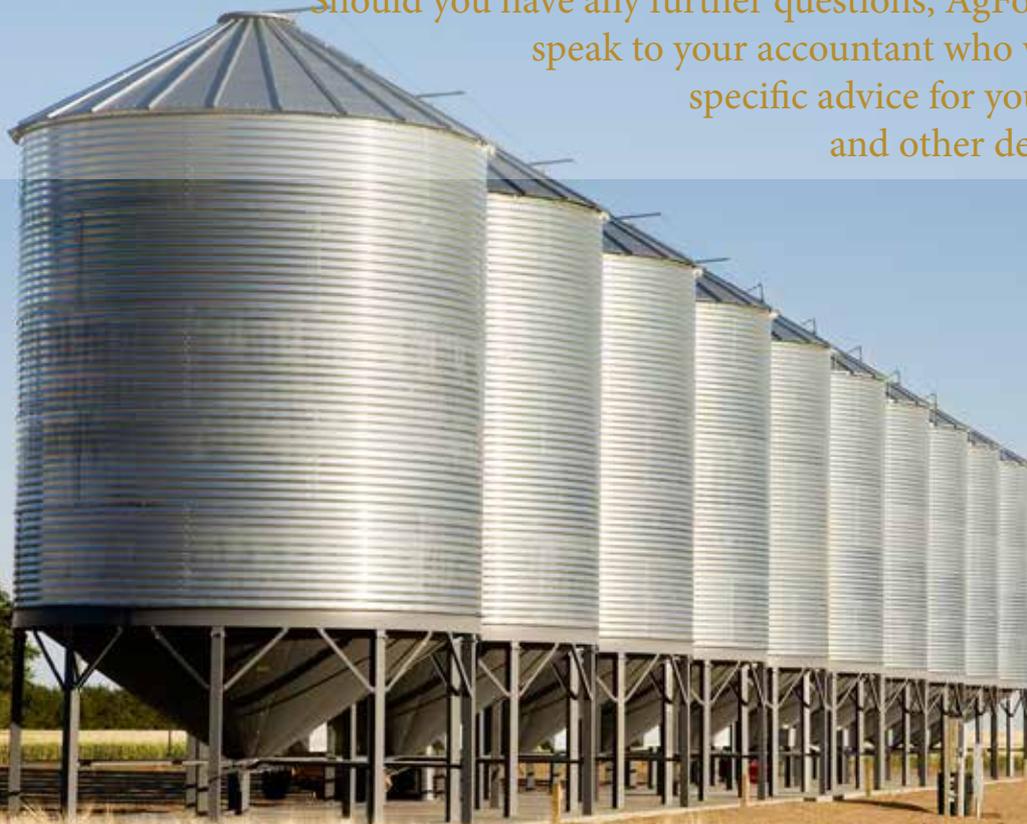
For a fodder storage asset to satisfy the 'primarily and principally' test, its main purpose must be to store fodder for the primary producer's own livestock.

## **What is classified as 'Fodder'?**

Fodder refers to food for livestock, such as grain, hay or silage. It can include liquid feed and supplements, or any feed that could fit into the ordinary meaning of fodder.

Typical examples of fodder storage assets include silos, liquid feed supplement storage tanks, bins for storing dried grain, hay sheds, grain storage sheds, and above-ground bunkers.

Should you have any further questions, AgForce recommends you speak to your accountant who will be able to provide specific advice for your particular situation and other depreciating asset rules.



# Natural Capital:

a new way to look at land management.



By AgForce

**NATURAL CAPITAL IS** a new way of looking at our environment that may help agricultural businesses develop diversified sources of income, that could assist them to not only grow but endure harsh climatic episodes.

Natural capital is the world's stock of natural resources, which includes geology, soils, air, water and all living organisms.

Many natural capital assets provide people with free goods and services, often called ecosystems services.

Features of our environment that directly or indirectly produce value to people, including ecosystems, species, freshwater, land, minerals, the air and oceans, as well as natural processes and functions are all elements of Natural Capital.

For over two centuries, landholders have invested in and managed properties for production and sale of agricultural commodities within various market arrangements that have ultimately focussed on production with little consideration of the natural capital used in producing those goods.

As awareness and concern for the environment and social expectation on greater value it provides has elevated, it is prudent to consider how the value of natural capital can be meaningfully incorporated into the wider market-based framework to ensure social, environmental and economic benefits being rewarded.

In time, the management of natural capital could become as important as financial capital.

Landholders recognise the need to protect the natural capital that underpins their production.

However, there is little recompense for the services the natural systems on their properties deliver to society.

As such, the benefits of lower food and fibre prices due to open competition within a free trade environment are enjoyed by all consumers, but at the cost of the environment with potential decline in resource condition.

To continue with the current approach to agricultural supply chains is not in the best interests of farmers or Australian consumers.

As farmers manage 51 per cent of Australia's land mass, they are in the best position to manage the land sustainably and protect the environment, and should be encouraged to do so.

Farmers need to be paid fair and equitable returns for the products and services their properties provide.

The best environmental outcomes are achieved by empowering and incentivising landholders to manage their landscapes.

Taking a Natural Capital approach enables all stakeholders to be able to measure the current state of natural assets in a pragmatic manner and ultimately incentivises landholders to improve land condition.

Providing market and financial drivers for improving natural capital lessens the requirement for regulatory control of vegetation and ecosystems and de-politicises natural resource management.

The measurement, restoration and building of Natural Capital introduces new economic threads into rural communities across Australia and can help agricultural businesses grow and thrive and endure harsh climatic episodes.

# League legends offer inspiration and fun

**RUGBY LEAGUE LEGENDS** Wally Lewis and Petro Civoniceva went Bush recently to provide inspiration, encouragement, and a well-deserved night out for farmers affected by drought.

Well-attended dinner events, funded by the Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors and delivered by AgForce as part of its Community Drought Project, were held in Charleville, Taroom and Nobby on the Darling Downs.

Noted for their courage and never-say die attitude on the footy field for club, State and country, the King of Lang Park and the 'Fridge and a Freezer' shared their personal stories of adversity, resilience and strength with more than 400 primary producers from across south-west Queensland.

The events offered a great opportunity for farmers and their families to re-connect with friends and neighbours, have a laugh and put their worries about the drought to one side, if only for a night.

Speaking in Taroom and Charleville, Wally talked frankly about facing and overcoming his personal challenges with epilepsy and his daughter Jamie-Lee's deafness.

He talked about growing up in Brisbane, his experiences through his incredible playing career, his work in the media, and his most important role as a father.

He also offered advice for aspiring sports stars in the region, noting its reputation for producing talent of the calibre of Artie Beetson and Jonathan Thurston.

In Nobby, legendary front rower Petero Civoniceva stressed the importance of looking after your mental health, and looking out for those around you.

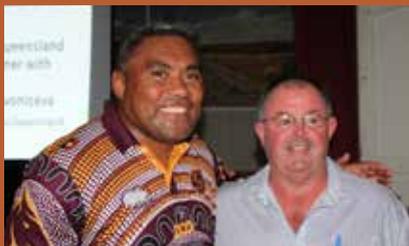
He talked about his work helping to turn around the lives of at-risk indigenous young people in his home town of Redcliffe.

AgForce Regional Manager Sharon Purcell, who drove Wally almost 2000 kilometres from Roma to Taroom to Charleville, said she was pleased to have received such positive feedback from attendees of the events.

"Everyone loved listening and talking to both Wally and Petero, and really enjoyed getting away from some fairly rugged drought conditions for dinner and drinks with neighbours," Sharon said.

"Whether talking with producers at the events or with fellow travellers at service stations on the road, Wally and Petero charmed all they met with their friendliness, openness and humility.

"And the respect was very definitely mutual, with the League legends describing the people they met as 'courageous' and 'salt of the earth'."



# Don't skip on your kip

The **Royal Flying Doctor Service** talks about the importance of sleep for physical and mental health

SLEEP is considered by scientists and health practitioners to be as important as a healthy diet and an active lifestyle to your physical and mental well-being. But are you getting enough?

**LONG-TERM LACK** of sleep has been linked to increased risk of depression, diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular disease and reduced lifespan.

Today, more than ever before, many of us do not get the amount of sleep we need. In times of great stress, getting enough sleep can be even harder – at a time you need it most!

The actual amount of sleep a person needs can differ greatly from person to person.

The best gauge is how you feel during the day. If you often find yourself feeling tired, you may require more sleep, or in some cases, be sleeping too much.

It's about finding the right level for your own body.

Many people also believe that alcohol is relaxing and helps them to get to sleep at first, but it actually interrupts the quality of sleep.

In fact, it's best to avoid alcohol for at least 4-6 hours before going to bed.

Check out these top tips to getting a good night's kip, supplied by the Centre for Clinical Interventions.

For further information or sleep advice specific to your situation, please contact the Drought Wellbeing Service in your area by emailing [infodws@rfdsqld.com.au](mailto:infodws@rfdsqld.com.au)



## Can't get to sleep? Try counting sheep

- Keep it regular - go to bed and get up at the same time each day
- Make sleep a priority!
- Minimise alcohol, caffeine and nicotine
- Don't stay in bed tossing and turning, get up and try again
- Get regular exercise, but not too close to bedtime
- Don't stuff yourself or starve yourself
- Make sure your bedroom is dark, quiet and comfortable
- Switch off the screens at least an hour before bed
- Avoid napping during the day if you struggle to sleep at night



# DROUGHT INFORMATION & ASSISTANCE CONTACTS

The key organisations listed below can provide a range of drought assistance, support and advice.

Further information on assistance with fodder, water, transport, everyday-living expenses, health and more can be found on the National Farmers' Federation (NFF) FarmHub: <https://farmhub.org.au/>

If you encounter problems with any of the contact details provided or know of other useful sources of assistance, please contact Amelia Shaw at AgForce on 07 3236 3100 or email [shawa@agforceqld.org.au](mailto:shawa@agforceqld.org.au)

	Assistance Type	Source	Contact Details
General	Queensland Government – Individually Droughted Property (IDP)	<b>Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (Queensland)</b> <a href="http://www.daf.qld.gov.au/business-priorities/agriculture/disaster-recovery/drought">www.daf.qld.gov.au/business-priorities/agriculture/disaster-recovery/drought</a>	13 25 23
	Commonwealth Government – Farm Management Deposits, tax relief and social support services	<b>Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (Australia)</b> <a href="http://www.agriculture.gov.au/ag-farm-food/drought">www.agriculture.gov.au/ag-farm-food/drought</a>	1800 900 090
On-Farm Support	Fodder – transport subsidy	<b>Drought Relief Assistance Scheme (DRAS)</b> <a href="http://www.daf.qld.gov.au/business-priorities/agriculture/disaster-recovery/drought">www.daf.qld.gov.au/business-priorities/agriculture/disaster-recovery/drought</a>	13 25 23
	Fodder – fodder drops	<b>Aussie Helpers</b> <a href="https://aussiehelpers.org.au/">https://aussiehelpers.org.au/</a>	1300 665 232
	Transport – permits, fees, registrations and the School Transport Assistance Scheme	<b>Department of Transport and Main Roads (Queensland)</b> <a href="http://www.tmr.qld.gov.au/Community-and-environment/Community-engagement/Natural-disaster-and-drought-assistance">www.tmr.qld.gov.au/Community-and-environment/Community-engagement/Natural-disaster-and-drought-assistance</a>	13 74 68
	Water – Water subsidies and Emergency Water Infrastructure Scheme	<b>Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (Queensland)</b> <a href="http://www.daf.qld.gov.au/business-priorities/agriculture/disaster-recovery/drought">www.daf.qld.gov.au/business-priorities/agriculture/disaster-recovery/drought</a>	13 25 23
Climate Information	Seasonal outlooks, drought situation reports	<b>The Long Paddock</b> <a href="http://www.longpaddock.qld.gov.au/">www.longpaddock.qld.gov.au/</a>	<a href="mailto:longpaddock@qld.gov.au">longpaddock@qld.gov.au</a>
	Weekly rainfall update, rainfall deficiencies, soil moisture, ground water, water storage	<b>Bureau of Meteorology</b> <a href="http://www.bom.gov.au/australia/meteye/">www.bom.gov.au/australia/meteye/</a> <a href="http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/drought/">www.bom.gov.au/climate/drought/</a> <a href="http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/rainfall/#tabs-rain=Impact-on-droughtRural">www.bom.gov.au/climate/rainfall/#tabs-rain=Impact-on-droughtRural</a>	(07) 3239 8700
Personal Support	Family Support –payments for parents and children	<b>Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme</b> <a href="http://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/assistance-for-isolated-children-scheme">www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/assistance-for-isolated-children-scheme</a>	13 23 18
	Relationship Support	<b>Relationships Australia</b> <a href="http://www.relationships.org.au/">www.relationships.org.au/</a>	1300 364 277
	Mental Health	<b>Queensland Health</b> <a href="http://www.qld.gov.au/health/mental-health/rural">www.qld.gov.au/health/mental-health/rural</a>	1300 MH CALL
		<b>Royal Flying Doctor Service (Drought Wellbeing Service)</b> <a href="http://www.flyingdoctor.org.au/qld/our-services/primary-health-care-services/drought-wellbeing-service/">www.flyingdoctor.org.au/qld/our-services/primary-health-care-services/drought-wellbeing-service/</a>	0427 288 432 (Gail) <a href="mailto:infodws@rfdsqld.com.au">infodws@rfdsqld.com.au</a>
		<b>Lifeline Australia</b> <a href="http://www.lifeline.org.au/">www.lifeline.org.au/</a>	13 11 14
		<b>Mensline Australia</b> <a href="http://mensline.org.au/">mensline.org.au/</a>	1300 78 99 78
		<b>Beyond Blue</b> <a href="http://www.beyondblue.org.au/">www.beyondblue.org.au/</a>	1300 22 4636
	<b>Suicide Call Back</b> <a href="http://www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au/">www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au/</a>	1300 659 467	
Household Support	Food and Household Items	<b>Farm Household Allowance</b> <a href="http://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/farm-household-allowance">www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/farm-household-allowance</a>	13 23 16
	Financial assistance for household items, bills and other expenses	<b>Drought Angels</b> <a href="http://www.droughtangels.org.au/">www.droughtangels.org.au/</a>	(07) 4662 7371
		<b>Queensland Country Women's Association (QCWA)</b> <a href="http://www.qcwa.org.au/what-we-do/public-rural-crisis-fund/">www.qcwa.org.au/what-we-do/public-rural-crisis-fund/</a>	(07) 3023 1220
		<b>The Salvation Army</b> <a href="http://salvos.org.au/about-us/news-and-stories/disasters-other-appeals/2018-droughts/">salvos.org.au/about-us/news-and-stories/disasters-other-appeals/2018-droughts/</a>	1300 551 030
Business Support	Loans – Concessional loans to improve on-farm profitability, succession and encouraging young people into farming.	<b>Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority</b> <a href="http://www.qrida.qld.gov.au">www.qrida.qld.gov.au</a>	1800 623 946
	Legal - Free basic legal advice	<b>Regional Investment Corporation</b> <a href="http://www.ric.gov.au/">www.ric.gov.au/</a>	1800 875 675
	Financial – identifying business options, negotiating with lenders etc	<b>Legal Aid Queensland – Farm and Rural Legal Service</b> <a href="http://www.legalaid.qld.gov.au/">www.legalaid.qld.gov.au/</a>	1300 65 11 88 <a href="mailto:frls@legalaid.qld.gov.au">frls@legalaid.qld.gov.au</a>
		<b>Rural Financial Counselling Service</b> North <a href="http://www.rfcsnq.com.au">www.rfcsnq.com.au</a> South <a href="http://www.rfcssq.org.au">www.rfcssq.org.au</a>	North (07) 4845 48 49 South (07) 4622 5500
Other expenses	Land Rent deferral, annual water license fee relief, and water infrastructure information	<b>Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy</b> <a href="https://www.dnrme.qld.gov.au/home/about-us/support-assistance/drought-declared-areas">https://www.dnrme.qld.gov.au/home/about-us/support-assistance/drought-declared-areas</a>	13 74 68
	Waiving fixed electricity charges	<b>Ergon Energy</b> <a href="https://www.ergon.com.au/retail/residential/support-programs/drought-relief">https://www.ergon.com.au/retail/residential/support-programs/drought-relief</a>	13 10 46
	Telecommunications	<b>Telstra</b> <a href="http://www.telstra.com.au/content/dam/tcom/about-us/community-environment/pdf/Telstra-Financial-Hardship-Policy.pdf">www.telstra.com.au/content/dam/tcom/about-us/community-environment/pdf/Telstra-Financial-Hardship-Policy.pdf</a>	13 22 00 (Say 'Hardship')