

NEED HELP WITH DROUGHT RELIEF IN NORTHLAND?



NORTHLAND EDITION
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THIS FACTSHEET DESCRIBES THE RANGE OF GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE TO FARMERS AND FARM WORKERS AFFECTED BY DROUGHT

New Zealand Government

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) co-ordinates the Government's response to drought.

MAF is monitoring conditions throughout New Zealand on a regular basis, and advising the Government accordingly.

MAF can provide funding for technology transfer-type activities, mainly via industry organisations. MAF is also involved in helping produce drought management information, such as pasture management and re-grassing.

For further information download a copy of the drought brochure from www.maf.govt.nz/mafnet/rural-nz/emergency-management/droughts/maf-drought-fieldday08.pdf

ANIMAL WELFARE

Under the Animal Welfare Act 1999, the responsibility for ensuring the health and welfare of animals rests with the owner or the person in charge. Farmers are urged to make timely decisions to avoid problems and to seek advice to ensure they meet the welfare needs of their stock. Advice is available from Federated Farmers, Farmers of New Zealand, vets, stock and feed agents and farm advisers.

Call the **MAF HELPLINE 0800 008 333** to report an animal welfare issue or make a complaint. All calls will be treated in confidence.

GRAZING AND SUPPLEMENTARY FEED (NON-GOVERNMENTAL ASSISTANCE)

DO YOU NEED TO FIND GRAZING OR SUPPLEMENTARY FEED? OR DO YOU HAVE SOME AVAILABLE?

Federated Farmers have activated their 0800 DROUGHT line (**0800 376 844**). This is primarily a feed line that matches farmers with surplus feed to those in need. Give them a call to register on their website database. This is available to all farmers.

Farmers of New Zealand are able to help farmers and lifestylers. For your local contacts refer to your phone book or call **09 430 3758 (Whangarei)** or **09 439 5219 (Dargaville)** or email info@nzfarmers.com

WORKING FOR FAMILIES

If your income has changed as a result of the drought, you may be eligible to receive extra money through Working for Families. Working for Families is a package designed to help make it easier to work and raise a family. It pays extra money to many thousands of New Zealand families. Greater financial support is available for:

- almost all families with children, earning under \$70 000 a year;
- many families with children, earning up to \$100 000 a year;
- some larger families earning more.

The Working for Families package is made up of three components and you may qualify for one or more depending on your personal situation.

1. WORKING FOR FAMILIES TAX CREDITS

Working for Families Tax Credits are paid to families with children aged 18 years or under to help with the cost of raising a family. They are made up of four types of payments:

- family tax credit;
- in-work tax credit;
- minimum family tax credit;
- parental tax credit.

2. CHILDCARE ASSISTANCE

Childcare Assistance can help with the cost of childcare for pre-school and school aged children. It is made up of two types of payments:

- Childcare subsidy;
- OSCAR subsidy (out of school care).

3. ACCOMMODATION SUPPLEMENT

An Accommodation Supplement can help to make housing more affordable. It can help with the cost of your rent, mortgage, board and other essential household costs. You don't have to have children to get an accommodation supplement.

To see if you're eligible for Working for Families, use the online calculators at www.workingforfamilies.govt.nz

Call **0800 774 004** for more information on housing and childcare, or **0800 227 773** for more information on tax credits.

STRESS COUNSELLING

Drought upsets the normal flow of life and can be very disruptive. It affects everything usually taken for granted and it is completely normal to feel emotionally down and physically unwell because of the drought situation.

You are not alone in feeling this way and you do not have to cope alone either. Local qualified and experienced counsellors are available and will travel to your farm to meet you at no cost.

These services are free and are administered through Victim Support, who has a list of counsellors available in your area. Please call them on **0800 842 846** or contact your nearest police station to speak to your local Victim Support representative, or contact your local Rural Support Trust.

VICTIM SUPPORT: 0800 842 846

NORTHLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL

Up-to-date information is available on the NRC website www.nrc.govt.nz/drought

RURAL SUPPORT TRUST – NORTHLAND

Rural Support Trusts provide assistance and support to the rural community in times of hardship, including adverse events such as drought.

You can contact your local Rural Support Trust representative for information on the assistance and support available:

Rural Support Trust – Northland

Helen Moodie

drought@landcare.org.nz

0800 778 667 (0800 RST NOR)

Tax relief and income assistance is available for farmers affected by the drought. Inland Revenue has a range of measures to help, depending on personal circumstances.

If you are concerned about tax payments, changes in income, refunds or filing dates, contact your tax agent or Inland Revenue's emergency helpline **0800 473 566**.

Tax assistance could include late deposits or early withdrawals from the income equalisation scheme, late re-estimates of provisional tax, extensions of time for filing, instalment arrangements, and remission of penalties. Please talk to your accountant.

Talk to Inland Revenue about:

- **THE INCOME EQUALISATION SCHEME**

Farmers who have money deposited in this scheme or the Adverse Event scheme may be able to make an early withdrawal, or deposit funds from forced sale of livestock.

- **LATE ELECTION OF PROVISIONAL TAX ESTIMATES OR REFUNDS**

You may be able to send a late estimate or re-estimate of provisional tax, if your circumstances have changed due to the drought. We could also arrange early refunds if provisional tax has been overpaid.

- **TAX OUTSTANDING**

Inland Revenue will consider instalment arrangements for outstanding tax in some circumstances.

- **LATE FILING AND LATE PAYMENT**

Extensions for some income tax returns may be available. Extensions can't be granted for GST and PAYE returns, but any penalties for late filing may be remitted. Penalties charged for late payments caused by the effects of the drought may also be remitted.

- **CHILD SUPPORT**

If you will have trouble making payments by due dates, please contact us on **0800 221 221** to discuss the situation.

OTHER TAX PROVISIONS

- Deductions for losses on farm when certain improvements are destroyed or irreparably damaged.
- Livestock or materials donated because of an adverse event may be treated zero-value.
- Payments or donations from charities are not taxable or liable for GST.
- Tax treatment of insurance payments depends on what the payments are compensating for, example, insurance for loss of capital assets is non-taxable, but income-replacement insurance may be taxed.
- If you need to borrow money to keep your farm going, the interest may be deductible.
- You may be eligible for the Independent Earner Tax Credit.

INLAND REVENUE'S EMERGENCY HELPLINE IS OPEN:

MONDAY TO FRIDAY	8AM-8PM
SATURDAY	9AM-1PM

INLAND REVENUE EMERGENCY HELPLINE: 0800 473 566



The Ministry of Social Development, through Work and Income, can provide a range of standard financial assistance to both farming and non-farming families whose incomes have been affected by drought. This financial assistance may include:

- **UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT**

The Unemployment Benefit provides financial assistance for people who are available for, and looking for full-time work or training for work.

- **EMERGENCY BENEFIT**

The Emergency Benefit provides financial assistance for people who are in hardship and unable to earn enough to support themselves and their family and cannot receive another benefit. In some cases this is because of sickness, injury, disability or caring responsibilities.

- **SPECIAL NEEDS GRANTS**

Special Needs Grants provide non-taxable, one-off recoverable or non-recoverable financial assistance to people to meet immediate needs. A person does not have to be receiving a benefit to qualify for a Special Needs Grant. This assistance is income and asset tested.

- **RECOVERABLE ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS**

The Recoverable Assistance Programme provides non-taxable, interest free, financial assistance to non-beneficiaries to meet essential immediate needs for specific items or services. This assistance is recoverable (for example, will need to be paid back at a later stage). The person must be able to identify a particular immediate need for an essential item or service. This assistance is income and asset tested.

RURAL ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS

Rural Assistance Payments are currently not activated but may be available in the future in the Far North, Whangarei, and Kaipara local authority areas. They are applicable to farmers who have a land-based industry that is in financial hardship and is not producing sufficient income to meet basic living expenses.

Farmers must meet additional criteria that apply to these payments, including an income test for other significant income, personal (non-farm) assets and cash asset test.

If you would like more information on Rural Assistance Payments you can contact the Northland Rural Support Trust **0800 778 667**.

For more information on other types of financial assistance please contact the Work and Income General Enquiry Line **0800 559 009**.

WORK AND INCOME NON-FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

In addition to the range of financial assistance available, we can assist farmers and their partners to find off-farm employment, including seasonal work, as well as access to personal support services such as stress counselling. We can also provide financial and job search assistance to workers in allied industries who are unable to work because of the drought.

Redundancy is a situation where there is genuinely no longer work for an employee to do. Refer to the Department of Labour's website *Surviving the tough times* at www.ers.dol.govt.nz/toughtimes/index.html

Work and Income has case managers who can attend community or shed meetings and make home visits where required. Work and Income also works closely with Rural Support Trust representatives.