

Resources and tools for dry times

April 2025

A collection of some of the available practical resources, online tools, videos and webinar recordings for farmers and advisers facing dry times.

General information and forecasts

| Resource | Information | Source |
|---|--|---|
| Online tool: My Climate View | My Climate View by Climate Services for Agriculture gives farmers and farm advisors future climate projections for specific commodities at a local scale right across Australia. | Future Drought Fund, CSIRO and Bureau of Meteorology |
| Web page (interactive map): Combined Drought Indicator | The Combined Drought Indicator Map helps you understand the emergence of drought in your area. | NSW DPIRD |
| Web page: State Seasonal Update | The State Seasonal Update gives an overview of seasonal conditions in NSW. | NSW DPIRD |
| Website: NSW DroughtHub | NSW DroughtHub is a one-stop online destination for information and support available to primary producers to prepare for and manage drought. It includes information about wellbeing and safety, and business and financial assistance. | NSW Department of Primary Industries & Regional Development (DPIRD) |
| App: Farm Tracker App | The Farm Tracker App is a simple tool that helps monitor seasonal conditions on your property. | NSW DPIRD |
| Guide/Booklet: Managing drought, fire and flood guide | The Managing drought, fire and flood guide includes planning, strategies and a drought action plan. | NSW DPIRD |

Livestock and feeding

| Resource | Information | Source |
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| 5-minute videos: Tips for livestock producers in dry times | Short videos with quick tips and tricks for landholders facing dry times on the topics of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Animal nutrition 2. Water quality 3. Livestock care 4. Pastures and groundcover | Local Land Services (LLS) |

| Resource | Information | Source |
|---|---|----------------------------------|
| Booklet: Drought plan template | A template drought plan can help you understand your current situation and what critical decisions you may need to make to prepare for drought, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Livestock on hand - Fodder on hand - Decision trigger points | LLS |
| Online tool/calculator: Drought and supplementary feed calculator | The drought and supplementary feed calculator is an essential tool for sheep and cattle producers to develop drought feed rations and rations for dry periods when supplementary feeding is required. | NSW DPIRD |
| Calculator: MLA Feed demand calculator | The Feed Demand Calculator is a tool for sheep and cattle producers that calculates, for each month of the year, the total feed demand of all the cattle and sheep on your property. | Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) |
| Video (Recording of webinar): The big question: Do I keep and feed or sell | One of the most difficult decisions in dry times is making a call on what stock you sell and what stock you retain and feed. Watch the recording of the Do I keep and feed or sell webinar to see advisor Phil Graham talk about the key factors to consider and explore various destocking options for sheep and cattle operations and their associated impacts on livestock numbers and cash flow in the short to medium term. | LLS |
| Video (Recording of webinar): Feeding cattle in dry times | Watch the recording of Feeding cattle in dry times to see beef cattle consultant Jeff House discuss the key principles in managing feeding cattle during dry times, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designing a ration to ensure livestock requirements are met whilst minimising cost • Types of feeds and feeding methods • What to watch out for in animal health | LLS |
| Video (Recording of webinar): Feeding sheep in dry times | Watch the recording of Feeding sheep in dry times to see sheep consultant Geoff Duddy discuss key principles in managing feeding sheep during dry times. | LLS |
| Video/Webinar: Early weaning of calves and lambs | Livestock producers can consider early weaning strategies to better manage stock and maintain productivity. Watch the Early weaning of calves and lambs video to understand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better utilisation of feed resources, both pastures and supplementary feeds | LLS |

| Resource | Information | Source |
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased market flexibility Maintaining herd productivity through fertility and longer recovery times. | |
| PDF download and web page: Guide to confinement feeding sheep and cattle in NSW | <p>Confinement feeding of sheep and cattle is a temporary, proactive management strategy that has increasingly been incorporated into on-farm drought management programs.</p> <p>Read the Local Land Services' Guide to confinement feeding to learn how to maintain livestock production during periods of limited feed availability and maintain groundcover across other parts of the property.</p> | LLS |
| Video: Fundamentals of confinement feeding | In the Fundamentals of confinement feeding video , Brett Littler from Local Land Services gives an overview of what a confinement feeding system is, the benefits it delivers and practical advice on managing for the best results. | LLS |

Pasture management

| Resource | Information | Source |
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| Calculator: MLA Pasture improvement calculator | The Pasture Improvement Calculator helps to determine the costs and benefits of resowing pastures compared to current practice. | MLA |
| Tool: Australian Feedbase Monitor | The Australian Feedbase Monitor is a world-first tool to help producers improve grazing management, forage budgeting and ground cover. | MLA |
| Web page: Pasture Tech Hub | The Pasture Tech Hub provides information on various aspects of perennial pasture management. Resources include information on pasture mixes, lucerne persistence, farmer experiences, scaled-out modelling of pasture management and location-specific information for perennial pasture management in southern NSW. | Holbrook Landcare Network |
| Case study: Drought resilient pastures | John Bruce (Barooga) and Chantelle and Christine Gorman (Savernake) share their insights on establishing and maintaining productive perennial legume-based pastures over the long term. | Riverine Plains |

Farm water management

| Resource | Information | Source |
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| Booklet: Farm Water Management Plan | Template plan for Farm Water Management | Farm Water Management Planning project |
| Online tool: Summer (farm) water calculator | Online summer water calculator to keep check on water levels in your dams and tanks and to estimate how long water for stock will last. | Agriculture Victoria |
| Video: Measuring the depth of your dam | Watch how to measure the depth of your dam and calculate its volume. | Agriculture Victoria |
| Booklet: Enhancing farm dams | Understand how to enhance farm dams for improved water quality, water security and farm productivity, while also supporting biodiversity. | ANU Sustainable Farms |
| Booklet: Farm dam planting guide | Learn what to plant in and around your dam for revegetation, including lists of recommended plants. | ANU Sustainable Farms |
| Online guide: Farm dams technical guide | Guide to the design and construction of high-performing dams | ANU Sustainable Farms |
| Video/Webinars: Farm water audit how to | Watch the farm water audit how-to webinar recordings on: 1. Quantifying farm water requirements 2. Estimating tank and dam storage capacity 3. Calculating losses and how long water will last | Holbrook Landcare |
| Web page: Managing water on your farm | Use this website and series of short videos to consider the various options available and have a plan in place to ensure you can manage water on your farm, no matter the conditions. | LLS |

For people seeking help

- If you or your community are experiencing drought and looking for help, the best place to start is the NSW Government's online Drought Hub droughthub.nsw.gov.au.
- For specific on-farm advice for farmers and landholders who are dealing with drought, [NSW Local Land Services](#) (LLS) is a key point of contact. The LLS team are on the ground to support farmers with advice, resources and contacts leading up to, during and after drought.
- LLS staff live in regional NSW and are available to offer hands-on support with current, localised information and advice on preparing for, managing and recovering from drought:
 - LLS [Drought Adoption Officers](#) assist in delivering drought planning and preparedness across the state.
 - LLS Livestock Officers provide technical advice on feeding and nutrition
 - LLS District Veterinarians manage and advise on livestock health and welfare
 - LLS Travelling Stock Reserve rangers manage permits for grazing on travelling stock reserves and roads
- You can call NSW Local Land Services on 1300 795 299 (during business hours) or you can find them online at lls.nsw.gov.au. Go across to the 'Help & Advice' menu and choose 'Drought' from the drop-down. That will open up a page of resources, links, downloads, and useful contact information.
- Other available services include:
 - Rural Aid – ruralaid.org.au – which supports farmers with fodder, domestic water, counselling, financial assistance and more.
 - NSW Rural Assistance Authority (RAA) – raa.nsw.gov.au – which provides tailored access to financial assistance to help regional and rural businesses and communities in NSW deal with challenges and change
 - Rural Financial Counselling Service (RFCS) NSW – rfcsnsw.org.au – which supports primary producers and small related enterprises located in Central and Southern NSW that are experiencing, or are at risk of, financial hardship.

The role of Southern NSW Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub

- While Southern NSW Innovation Hub doesn't offer frontline support services in times of drought, it is what our partners do – in particular [Local Land Services \(LLS\)](#), [NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development \(DPIRD\)](#), and [Rural Aid](#).
- Instead, we work behind the scenes on longer-term strategies that help to build future drought resilience in our region as part of a more proactive approach to drier seasons.
- It's our role to support drought preparation and help producers and communities plan ahead and make positive management decisions. We invest in tools, resources, modern solutions and practices that help farmers prepare for, adapt to and recover from drought.
- At any given time, the region covered under Southern NSW Innovation Hub's footprint will be experiencing a myriad of environmental impacts and climate conditions across agriculture, industry, and community, including drought.
- For times when farmers, producers and communities need information, resources or support services, our network of partners and contacts are here to help.
- Find more resources and contacts at csu.edu.au/research/southern-nsw-drought-resilience-hub/drought-resources