BEEFnews
HUNTER VALLEY, UPPER MANNING & CENTRAL COAST

WINTER 2006 | NSW Department of Primary Industries, www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/beefnews

A quarterly newsletter for beef producers of the Hunter Valley, Upper Manning and Central Coast areas of NSW.

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NSW DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES

Livestock Producer Assurance (LPA)/ National Vendor Declaration Audits

Ian Blackwood, Livestock Officer (Beef Products), Paterson

The LPA Program operated by MLA is now in full operation with on-farm audits being conducted.

In the Hunter Region audits have been taking place over the past four months. To be audited under the LPA Program you have to be in receipt of your second LPA/NVD booklet, which will have your PIC pre printed on them.

The audits are conducted by people who are accredited to the LPA Program by MLA. There are guidelines to how the auditors operate and specifically about how the visit to your property is arranged.

The LPA Program requires you to keep records about the following activities within your beef enterprise;

- Livestock purchases
- Livestock sales
- Livestock feeding record
- Crop, pasture and paddock treatments
- Grain & fodder treatment record
- Livestock treatments
- Property risk assessment

Don't be "thrown" by the property risk assessment. To complete this task ask the following questions

New on the DPI website

Beef Cattle Stocking Rates and Farm Size gives an easy to follow overview of key issues for beef cattle production in the Hunter and coastal areas.

It also provides a ready reckoner for calculating the area required for efficient, sustainable beef cattle enterprises.

While focused on the Hunter Valley and Gloucester areas, the information also applies to the Mid North Coast and the wider Hunter Central Rivers Catchment Mgt Authority region.

Visit the website at www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture and follow the links to Beef Cattle Stocking Rates and Farm size - Hunter Region

Has the area of land covered by my P.I.C. ever been quarantined from a chemical residue trace back? Your RLPB District Veterinarian would have contacted you. They can provide a statement if you ask for it.

If you have purchased part of a property and been issued with a new P.I.C. then you will not be able to have a past 'clean' history.

Are there risk sites on my land e.g. old dump sites, log dump storage sites, timber buildings in sound condition after more than 30 years of life, old chemical storage areas?

Do cattle have physical access to these sites?

How will you or do you stop cattle having access to such sites?

In our geographic area chemical residue tracebacks are usually a result of misadventures at individual animal level. However, we were users of the chemicals that kept white ants at bay… for a long time. These are the ones we need to watch out for, even though they've been banned for decades.

The LPA program has a suggested record keeping format. We can send you out a copy if you contact the Paterson or Scone office.

Buying poultry litter for fertiliser

Ian Blackwood, Livestock Officer (Beef Products), Paterson

If you buy poultry litter (usually broiler shed litter) to use as a fertiliser then make sure you follow the practices that have been set out for this use.

"Best practice guidelines for using poultry litter on pastures" tells you all you need to know. You can obtain a copy at www.agric.nsw.gov.au/reader/past-management/dpi212.htm

The supplier of the poultry litter may also ask you to sign a 'Warning & Disclaimer' form. The form, developed by NSW Farmers, is easy to use and is a simple step to take to reduce potential risks from selling litter. Get a copy of this Warning & Disclaimer form from the NSW Farmers website at www.nswfarmers.org.au. Read it carefully so you'll know what is intended by it. If you sign one of these documents make sure a copy stays with you and is placed in your Livestock Producer Assurance (LPA/NVD) records.

Drought Tips & Techniques

Ian Blackwood, Livestock Officer (Beef Products), Paterson

With the current drought looking at extending through winter and into September the outlook is 'not smart'.

To help you with some decisions you will have to make, here are some tips & techniques you may find useful.

1. Talk to your accountant… not only about taxation but about your cash-flow position from the options you have.

2. Take your accountant's information to your bank manager if financing needs to be organised.

3. Be realistic about;
   - The number of stock you will feed
   - Your physical capability of feeding them
   - Your cash-flow position between now and January 2007
   - Accessing feed supplies
   - Carting water.

4. Make a plan (write it down) to cover 90 day time periods e.g. June to September.

5. Then 'work' every part of the plan, modifying only as significant events happen e.g. rain/cattle prices/stock feed price movements.

6. Organise your stock feed supplies to cover this 90 day planning period.
   For stock feed - go bulk to reduce /tonne cost
   - place orders to secure price and supply.

   Click here to compare the cheapest feed or go to page 9 of the newsletter.

7. Cows need your help this calving, not to calve but to maintain bodyweight.
   Your help before calving means ;
   - a drench
   - 7 in 1 booster (if not done the autumn past)
   - a lice treatment
   - a Vitamin A,D & E injection

8. Reduce numbers by selling 9 & 10 year old cows because this will cause the least financial impact on your business. By this we mean that your timeframe to return to pre drought production will be least, but will still be 3-4 years.

ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDERS ORGANISATION (EDO) – *Rural Landholder's Guide to Environmental Law*

This publication, published with the assistance of Hunter-Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority, is designed to help landholders understand their legal rights and manage their land in accordance with environmental and natural resource management law.

Topics covered in the guide include:

- Vegetation management
- Protected plants and animals
- Bushfire management
- Water management
- Development consent.

The full text of the guide is available on the Environmental Defenders Organisation website at: www.edo.org.au/edonsw/site/publications.php.

Free copies of this publication are available from the EDO or the Hunter-Central Rivers CMA. To order copies, please contact Tisha Dejmanee at tisha.deimanee@edo.org.au or 02 9262 6989.

9. On most properties, at this stage of the drought energy and not protein is the most lacking nutrient … apart from water which for many properties is now a major limitation. So buy energy dense feeds and not protein supplements.

10. If you are running out of water then selling should be a real decision.

11. Keep making decisions because when you stop you'll lose control of the situation.

12. From the 2006 joining what conception rate is acceptable to you? This will impact on your 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 income.

13. Bring your cattle into paddocks that have water and can be renovated/improved after the drought. These paddocks are "sacrifice paddocks" that allow you to maintain groundcover elsewhere on the property.

14. Maintain your groundcover at 90% in our geographic area.

15. Fence off unusable water e.g. bogged dams/algae/spoiled water.

What will you do with the calves when they begin to arrive from mid July on?

If you feed the cows for their fertility (to cycle for a pre drought joining pattern) then they will milk satisfactorily. This means that calves will reach 100 kg liveweight at around 12 weeks of age. What markets exist for these weights or do you wean and feed?

Talk to your agent and abattoirs about these calf options.

Transferring Stock Yourself on the NLIS Database

Ian Blackwood, Livestock Officer (Beef Products), Paterson

The NLIS does allow you to transfer stock purchases "by hand" and has developed a 'Form A Livestock Movement' to make this easier and consistent.

If you use this form then you can;

- Transfer up to a maximum of 20 head per form
- List either the Radio Frequency Identification Number (RFID) or the National Livestock Identification System Identification Number (NLIS ID).

Using this form allows people, who do not need to have a reader, to use the NLIS ID number as a record of transfer.

The NLIS ID number is the visual number on the NLIS device (see picture). It has 15 or 16 characters and you have to write down all of them! *Yes, you will have to head bail cattle to read the characters.*

The Livestock Movement Form is set out to make that easier. You can download the form from the Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) website www.mla.com.au or click here Form A Livestock Movement. Alternatively, you can obtain a copy at our Scone or Paterson office. The form must be faxed or posted to the NLIS Database at MLA.

Testing Times…. Talk to us

Ian Blackwood, Livestock Officer (Beef Products), Paterson

NSW Department of Primary Industries is back in the testing business. We are now able to provide you with the following fee-for-service tests that will help with important farm decisions.

⇒ Water Quality Testing: for irrigation, stock and domestic (not human consumption) purposes. There is a standard kit test for all farm water supplies plus an ICP scan, nitrate and phosphate and ammonia, nitrate and phosphate (effluent).

⇒ Soil Testing: for pasture development and maintenance and crop production. There is a basic test, a grazing test and a cropping test. Interpretations are available through the NSW DPI Agronomists at Scone and Paterson.

⇒ Worm Test: *(for horses)* to determine if your horse(s) need worming or if the wormer you use is effective. *(for cattle/sheep/goats/alpaca/deer)* to determine if your animals need drenching, your most recent drench has worked, your current stock have liver fluke. Tests available include Worm Egg Count, Count & Worm Type and Liver Fluke Egg Count.

⇒ Feed Test: for hays, grains, protein meals, crop and food industry by-products. This will tell you the quality of your feed and its usefulness to your animal. Interpretations are available from our Paterson office.

Free sampling kits are available from our Scone and Paterson offices. They are all Reply Paid ready to post back. Prices are included in the kits, and they are competitive with other providers.
Scone office: 6545 1800
Paterson office: 4939 8940

Consent for feedlots in droughts

Feedlots are defined as a confined area where livestock are held and wholly (or substantially) fed on prepared or manufactured feed for the purpose of production - National Feedlot Guidelines (1997).

A poorly located, or poorly managed feedlot can affect water quality, degrade soils or create conflict with neighbours over odour or noise. Feedlot design and management is also important for animal welfare and productivity.

Because of such concerns, development approval is required for all feedlots in NSW which hold 50 or more head of cattle. Local Environmental Plans can also specify zones (eg rural residential) where feedlots may be prohibited.

Yards used to confine livestock temporarily for weaning, dipping, or other husbandry purposes are, however, exempt from needing consent. Feedlots used during, or immediately following, drought, flood, fire or similar emergency management situations are also exempt.

Hence Council consent is not needed for a feedlot used only to feed cattle during drought times. If you are about to expend money and effort to set up such a feedlot, however, it is still wise to select the best possible site. Major purchasers of lot fed cattle are also increasingly demanding industry accreditation, which inturn means the feedlot must have relevant approvals. So if you're thinking about using the feedlot to finish cattle in non drought situations it's a good idea to get things right from the start.

So what is involved in gaining consent for a feedlot from your local council?

To provide for consistent planning and assessment of cattle feedlots (and piggeries) State Environmental Planning Policy No 30 (Intensive Agriculture) sets out what local councils must consider when deciding whether to grant consent for a feedlot.

This includes:

- the potential for the pollution of surface waters (i.e. streams) and ground water,
- the potential for degradation of soils
- the potential for odours to adversely affect other residents in the area
- measures for the health and welfare of animals and
- relevant (industry) guidelines.

Councils are also required to assess the adequacy of the information provided. As a minimum you would be required to submit a Statement of Environmental Effects which describes the feedlot design features (eg number and size of animals and how long kept for, slopes, soil compaction, pen size), outlines the proposed management practices (eg, hospital pens, clean out and feeding arrangements) and measures to reduce potential adverse impacts (eg catch drains, manure removal).

Larger scale feedlots (in excess of 1000 head will require a licence from the Department of Environment) and need to prepare a more detailed standard of development application.

Seek advice before you finalise your site or expend funds. Guidelines on beef cattle feedlots are available from www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/reader/feedlotting.

Help with identifying the best possible site, relevant design standard and management practices for your feedlot is available from your local beef cattle livestock advisor www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/aboutus/about/office_locations and from feedlot industry associations.

Your DPI regional Resource Management Officer may also be able to help clarify planning approval requirements.

Using carcase information

Todd Andrews, NSW DPI Livestock Officer (beef cattle), Scone

The introduction of the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) is designed to protect and enhance Australia's reputation as a producer of quality beef by providing lifetime traceability of every animal. However, its introduction has also provided beef producers with a means of obtaining and utilising individual carcase feedback from processors. The ability for beef producers to use carcase information is becoming increasingly important to maintain farm viability, increasing domestic beef demand and Australia's international beef trade.

Accessing carcase information

Beef processors in NSW are required to provide basic carcase information to the NLIS database, including date of slaughter, NLIS device numbers, consignment property identification code (PIC) and carcase weight. Beef producers can access carcase information by registering with the NLIS database and following the prompts, or by nominating a third party to register on their behalf.

Such basic information is of little value in terms of carcase feedback however, and producers who directly consign cattle to slaughter are urged to seek and use more comprehensive information from their processors.

For example, most of the major NSW beef processors can link NLIS numbers with the standard carcase feedback available to producers. That feedback contains a range of information and usually includes: hot standard carcase weight (HSCW), sex, dentition, P8 fat depth, butt shape & bruise score.

CASSINO

Northern Co-operative Meat Company Limited

Export Establishment 239 Phone: 02 66622444
email: cassino@nor.com.au Facs: 02 66622391

Carcase Dressing to Ausmeat Specification of a Standard Carcase.

Feedback Sheet : Beef Ausmeat A+ Category Fat Probe Operator

Consignee **Vendor 1**
Consigned To Operator 1 Date of Slaughter 03/05/06

Lot No	Mkt	Body Number	Weight Kgs	Sex	Age Teeth	Fat mm	Bruise L	Bruise R	Property ID	NLIS ID Number	RFID Number	Test	Com pan	DPI	Condemn Part / Reason
73	2K	6432	208.4	M	0	9	0	0	NH120[redacted]	NH120[redacted]XBA00[redacted]	982 000031458[redacted]				
	2K	6430	204.6	M	0	8	0	0	NH120[redacted]	NH120[redacted]XBA00[redacted]	982 000031687[redacted]				
	2K	6436	203.2	M	0	12	0	0	NH120[redacted]	NH120[redacted]XBA00[redacted]	982 000031688[redacted]				
	2K	6435	201.8	M	0	8	0	0	NH120[redacted]	NH120[redacted]XBA00[redacted]	982 000031458[redacted]				
	2K	6431	200.8	M	0	5	0	0	NH120[redacted]	NH120[redacted]XBA00[redacted]	982 000031534[redacted]				
	2K	6433	197.8	F	0	12	0	0	NH120[redacted]	NH120[redacted]XBA00[redacted]	982 000031458[redacted]				
	2K	6434	195.8	F	0	10	0	0	NH120[redacted]	NH120[redacted]XBA00[redacted]	982 000031458[redacted]				

Lot Total **Total Carcasses = 7** **Total Weight = 1412.4** **Average Wgt = 201.8** **Average Fat = 9.143**

A Cassino feedback sheet with animals identified with NLIS and RFID numbers.

Using carcase information

Discounts for carcases that fail to meet specifications vary between processors as well as seasonally, but can be substantial. Producers able to relate carcase information to live animals using NLIS numbers are in an excellent position to minimise the risk of carcases not complying with market specifications.

Comparing carcase information

Carcase feedback data on the NLIS website is available to all producers who consign stock directly to abattoirs and to the breeders of those animals. It will be most useful however, to producers who consign stock direct to processors or to feedlots prior to slaughter. In those cases, knowledge of the nutritional and environmental history of those animals may allow valid comparisons.

In order for producers to compare the carcase data of different animals, it is important that the animals being compared are run under similar conditions prior to slaughter. For example, a producer wanting to compare the carcase performance of steers from different sires would need to run the steers in the same mob. Similarly, a producer wanting to compare the impact of different nutrition programs on carcase performance would need to have animals from the same bull(s) in each of the nutrition 'treatments'.

An example of an invalid comparison would be where a group of steers by Sire A were run separately to a group of steers by Sire B. In that case, it would be impossible to determine if any carcase difference were due to the genetic effect of the different sires or the environmental/nutritional effect of the different paddocks.

More information:
NSW DPI website at www.dpi.nsw.gov.au
NSW DPI NLIS enquiries at enquiries.nlis@dpi.nsw.gov.au or 1300 720405
NLIS database service at www.nlis.com.au or 1800 654 743.

What is the cheapest feed? *(refer page 3 'Drought Tips & Techniques)*

$/t DM

ME	80	100	120	140	160	180	200	220	240	260	280	300	320	340	360	380	400
7	1.15	1.43	1.72	2.00	2.29	2.57	2.86	3.14	3.43	3.71	4.00	4.29	4.57	4.86	5.14	5.43	5.71
7.5	1.07	1.34	1.60	1.87	2.13	2.40	2.67	2.93	3.20	3.47	3.73	4.00	4.27	4.53	4.80	5.07	5.33
8	1.00	1.25	1.50	1.75	2.00	2.25	2.50	2.75	3.00	3.25	3.50	3.75	4.00	4.25	4.50	4.75	5.00
8.5	0.94	1.18	1.41	1.65	1.88	2.12	2.35	2.59	2.82	3.06	3.29	3.53	3.76	4.00	4.24	4.47	4.71
9	0.89	1.11	1.34	1.56	1.78	2.00	2.22	2.44	2.67	2.89	3.11	3.33	3.56	3.78	4.00	4.22	4.44
9.5	0.84	1.06	1.27	1.47	1.68	1.89	2.11	2.32	2.53	2.74	2.95	3.16	3.37	3.58	3.79	4.00	4.21
10	0.80	1.00	1.20	1.40	1.60	1.80	2.00	2.20	2.40	2.60	2.80	3.00	3.20	3.40	3.60	3.80	4.00
10.5	0.76	0.95	1.15	1.33	1.52	1.71	1.90	2.10	2.29	2.48	2.67	2.86	3.05	3.24	3.43	3.62	3.81
11	0.73	0.91	1.09	1.27	1.45	1.64	1.82	2.00	2.18	2.36	2.55	2.73	2.91	3.09	3.27	3.45	3.64
11.5	0.70	0.87	1.05	1.22	1.39	1.57	1.74	1.91	2.09	2.26	2.43	2.61	2.78	2.96	3.13	3.30	3.48
12	0.67	0.84	1.00	1.17	1.33	1.50	1.67	1.83	2.00	2.17	2.33	2.50	2.67	2.83	3.00	3.17	3.33
12.5	0.64	0.80	0.96	1.12	1.28	1.44	1.60	1.76	1.92	2.08	2.24	2.40	2.56	2.72	2.88	3.04	3.20
13	0.62	0.77	0.93	1.08	1.23	1.38	1.54	1.69	1.85	2.00	2.15	2.31	2.46	2.62	2.77	2.92	3.08

It is important to value feed on an energy basis because energy of a feed is often what limits animal production. When the price per tonne of dry matter and energy value of a feed is known (from feed test or estimate) then use this table to find the cheapest feed on an ME basis, ie. ¢/MJ.

Example: If you are offered two stockfeed choices – barley at $200/tonne and oats at $180/tonne (both landed) then which one would you buy? You are told that the energy (ME) contents are 13 for the barley and 11.5 for the oats.

For the cost of barley ¢/MJ DM look at 13 on the Vertical ME column and rule across until you are under $200/t DM and read 1.54¢/MJ. For the oats ¢/MJ DM look at 11.5 on the vertical ME column and rule across until you are under $180/t DM and read 1.57¢/MJ.

Result: There is 0.03¢/MJ difference so you could buy either, all other practicalities being equal.