

BIOSECURITY ACT 2015

Straying stock

Straying Stock

Land managers have a responsibility to ensure their stock do not wander from their property onto other private land or public property. The *Dividing Fences Act 1991* defines what a sufficient dividing fence is and outlines the responsibilities of owners for doing fencing work.

Stock can create a biosecurity risk if they are allowed to wander; similarly they may become exposed to pests and diseases if they leave their property. Pests and diseases are managed using a variety of tools under the *Biosecurity Act 2015* depending on their risk, including a general biosecurity duty.

The general biosecurity duty requires a person dealing with biosecurity matter or a carrier and who knows or ought to know of the biosecurity risks associated with that biosecurity matter or carrier to take measures to prevent, minimise or eliminate the risk as far as reasonably practicable.

What is the biosecurity risk of straying stock?

If stock are infested or infected with diseases such as sheep lice and virulent footrot and wander from their home property to neighbouring properties, it is highly likely those diseases will spread to the stock on the neighbouring properties, impacting on animal health and welfare and subsequently production.

Stock also carry weed seeds in their coats and or gut. Straying stock pose a real risk to the spread of weeds between properties and weed control areas.

What is my responsibility?

All land managers have a general biosecurity duty to manage biosecurity risks that they know about, or could reasonably be expected to know about. Land managers would be expected to know about the biosecurity risks of their stock straying. Land managers can meet their general biosecurity duty by undertaking activities such as:

- Ensuring all boundary fences are sound and stock proof
- Regularly monitoring stock to keep track of their whereabouts and health status
- Managing pests and diseases in stock as soon as detected to prevent their spread
- Developing a farm biosecurity plan

What do I do if I see stray stock on public land?

- If the owner of the stock is known, notify the owner that their stock are straying so they can recover them
- Report the stray stock to the appropriate authority or land manager – Local Land Services or Local Government Ranger. This is particularly important if the stock appear to be unwell or obviously diseased

What do I do if there is stray stock on my land?

- Isolate the stray stock from your animals and keep them contained in a secure yard

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until they can be either returned to the owner or reported to local authorities for further action

- Examine the stock for signs of pests and disease. Consider contacting your Local Land Services if you need advice.
- Contact the owner of the stock if known, to arrange for them to be collected or returned.
- Do not just put them back in a neighbouring paddock without contacting the neighbour – this may inadvertently spread more risk.
- Monitor your stock and pastures that were exposed for a period of time for signs of pests or disease. For example, sheep lice infestations may take 4-5 months to be detected; virulent footrot may take weeks - months depending on weather conditions; weed seeds may take weeks - months to germinate depending on weather conditions.
- Contact your Local Land Services team, Local Control Authority (weeds) or private veterinarian for assistance if signs of a problem develop.

How do I stop my neighbour's stock from constantly coming onto my land?

- Ensure your boundary fences are stock proof for the type of stock contained
- Talk to your neighbour to develop an approach for how to handle stray stock and to discuss any repairs to boundary fencing. The *Dividing Fences Act 1991* can

assist these discussions by confirming obligations for landowners in relation to fencing. This may also include consideration of double fencing a boundary, planting tree lines or putting in stock laneways to create an additional buffer in high risk areas.

If the stock continue to stray, discuss the matter with a local authority (LawAccess NSW, Local Land Services, Local Government or NSW Police Stock Squad) about the available options.

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