



Livestock movements in emergencies – NLIS and General Biosecurity Duty

PROCEDURE NUMBER:	INT20/2798	VERSION	1
AUTHORISED BY:	Director, Compliance & Integrity Systems	AUTHORISED DATE	14/04/2020
ISSUED BY:	Compliance and Integrity Systems	EFFECTIVE DATE	14/04/2020
CATEGORY:	Operations and Industry	REVIEW DATE:	01/07/2022

Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to provide advice on how National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) requirements are to be applied in emergency situations such as natural disasters like bush fires and floods.

In emergency situations such as bushfires, floods or other natural disasters livestock may have to be moved quickly due to the need to:

- remove stock from actual or possible danger
- secure stock where fences have been burned or washed away
- access feed through agistment
- rehome strayed stock

The following procedure outlines how the NLIS requirements and the General Biosecurity Duty (GBD) can be met in emergency livestock movement situations.

Contents

Livestock movements in emergencies – NLIS and General Biosecurity Duty	1
Purpose	1
Procedure	2
1. Livestock movements in emergencies.....	2
1.1 Welfare considerations.....	2
1.2 NLIS requirements in emergencies.....	2
2. General Biosecurity Duty	3
Definitions.....	3
Legislation.....	4
Related policies	4
Other related documents.....	4
Superseded documents	4
Revision history.....	4
Contact	4

Procedure

1. Livestock movements in emergencies

1.1 Welfare considerations

Livestock welfare is a priority in any emergency situation. Where possible, the decision whether to move livestock between properties in an emergency resides with the respective owners of the stock and the properties.

1.2 NLIS requirements in emergencies

It is a requirement under the Biosecurity (NLIS) Regulation 2017 (the NLIS Regulation) that the owner of any identifiable stock (cattle, sheep, goats and pigs) must ensure the stock are properly identified with a permanent identifier before leaving any property on which it is kept.

If an emergency situation is threatening the property where identifiable stock are kept, stock may be moved without being properly identified and without a stock permit issued by Local Land Services (LLS) or a permit granted under the *NSW Biosecurity Act 2015*.

The Group Biosecurity Permit 'NLIS Emergencies' is available on the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) website for when stock are moved in emergencies:

https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/746965/NLIS-Emergency-Permit-varied.pdf

The 'NLIS Emergencies' Group Permit authorises movements that, but for the permit, would or might contravene a requirement imposed by or under the *Biosecurity Act 2015*. If stock is located on a property affected by an emergency and the emergency necessitates their urgent movement to another property in order to protect the stock, the Group Permit applies and an individual permit is not required.

However, unidentified stock moved due to an emergency must be 'properly identified' as soon as is practicable after they arrive at the property of refuge, unless they are returned directly to the original property from which they were moved within 7 days. The owner of the identifiable stock must make a record of the emergency movement using an NLIS movement document. If possible, the movement of the stock to the refuge property should be recorded in the NLIS database.

Unidentified stock leaving the property of refuge and moving back to their original property within 7 days can be moved unidentified in accordance with a stock permit issued by Local Land Services (LLS) or a permit granted under the *NSW Biosecurity Act 2015*.

Stock which cannot be properly identified and move from the property of refuge to sale, slaughter or another property, e.g. for agistment, must be identified with a post-breeder device for the refuge property if possible or an 'emergency' post-breeder device obtained from LLS, before they leave the refuge property. The movement must also be recorded on the NLIS database and the stock accompanied by an NLIS movement document.

The following actions should be taken by an authorised officer or animal welfare inspector with cattle that are euthanased for animal welfare reasons:

- if the cattle have NLIS devices and are disposed on the same property, their devices should be read and uploaded as 'deceased' to the NLIS database. However this is optional and might not be practical if large numbers are involved, or tags are damaged (e.g. by fire), or if the cattle have been euthanased on another property.

The NLIS database function Mob-based movement for Cattle may be used by State Department of Agriculture (SDA) Heavy or Medium accounts, assigned to DPI and LLS officers, to record movements of cattle from and to any PIC during emergency situations. This function negates the need for scanning individual identified cattle and may assist authorised officers in recording cattle moved in emergency situations.

2. General Biosecurity Duty

The GBD is a key principle of the *Biosecurity Act 2015*, which prohibits some high-risk activities and materials - there is also a general obligation on people to be aware of their surroundings and take action to prevent the introduction and spread of pests, diseases, weeds and contaminants.

Where livestock are under any regulatory movement restrictions due to the presence of disease this must be taken into account when determining the destination of the livestock in an emergency. Where alternative options for movement are available, disease management should be taken into consideration.

Where stock are moved from or to a holding subject to a biosecurity direction, the status of the stock or the holding may be affected. It is important that people involved in an official capacity with the emergency movement of stock should be informed of the disease status of the stock to assist in managing the biosecurity risk associated with their movement.

If not determined prior to the emergency movement, the LLS Biosecurity officer is required to undertake a risk assessment to resolve the disease status of livestock or land where an emergency movement has involved a holding and animals subject to a biosecurity direction.

Definitions

- Emergency situations: for the purpose of this procedure mean natural disasters such as floods and bushfires
- GBD: general biosecurity duty required under the *Biosecurity Act 2015*
- LLS: Local Land Services
- NLIS: National Livestock Identification System
- NLIS movement document: includes a Livestock Production Assurance (LPA) National Vendor Declaration (NVD) for the relevant species, a transported stock statement (TSS), a stock permit granted under the *Local Land Services Act 2013*, and a permit granted under the *Biosecurity Act 2015*.
- Properly identified: means as described in clause 17 of the Biosecurity (NLIS) Regulation 2017, and includes attaching a permanent identifier (an NLIS accredited breeder or post-breeder device) to cattle, sheep, goats or pigs on the property to which the PIC on the tag relates, or additionally a permanent brand identifier for pigs.
- SDA: State Department of Agriculture

Legislation

- *Biosecurity Act 2015*
- Biosecurity (NLIS) Regulation 2017

Related policies

- NLIS policies and procedures at: <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/animals-and-livestock/nlis>

Other related documents

- N/A

Superseded documents

This procedure replaces:

- N/A

Revision history

Version	Date issued	Notes	By
1.0	24/04/2020	N/A	N/A

Contact

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