

MANAGING LIVESTOCK AFTER BUSHFIRES



Robbie Neale, CEO & Ash Hunt, Technical Services Manager / January 2020

We have been receiving a lot of questions from many of you who are looking for ways to move forward, and while many of you are still battling the conditions we hope the following information will be helpful to aid you in the recovery process. We also hope to help guide you in taking steps to minimise the loss of production of livestock that survived these horrific bushfires.

Our aim right now is to provide an action plan for the welfare of livestock affected by bushfires.

As a top priority, we recommend seeking Veterinary and Departmental advice and assessment on injured / burnt livestock.

Water

Water is THE MOST important nutrient for survival of livestock. Figure 1 [right] is a guide of water requirements for sheep, cattle, and horses, to help you budget water requirements. It is important to use quality water sources during this time of stress, the factsheet from the *NSW DPI* also gives more information on water quality parameters for livestock, this can be found online at https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/96273/Water-requirements-for-sheep-and-cattle.pdf. More information on how bushfires can affect water quality can be found at <https://www.waterquality.gov.au/issues/bushfires>

Feed Requirements

We understand the bushfires may have burnt out all/majority of your paddock feed and therefore outsourcing supplementary feed will be challenging and you may be limited in your options. We also understand the only supplementary feed you have access to may be donations from your generous neighbours and community groups so making the best out of what you have available is key.

Stock type	Consumption Per head per day (L)
Sheep	2-4
Weaners	
Adult dry sheep	2-6
- grassland	4-12
- saltbush	
Ewes with lambs	4-10
Cattle	
Lactating cows	
- grassland	40-100
- saltbush	70-140
Young stock	25-50
Dry stock (400 kg)	35-80
Horses	40-50

Figure 1: Average Water Requirements for Stock
Notes: [Please see references for source and further details]. Figures quoted for consumption have a wide range; this variation is explained in the text [in the complete factsheet]. When planning water supply requirements, allow for evaporation losses and consumption by native and feral animals.

If at all possible we recommend prioritising high energy feeds such as barley, wheat, lupins, beans, etc to growing stock and livestock at the point of calf or lamb and/or lactation. It's important to keep your young stock growing because they are your replacement breeders or quick cashflow. Energy is key in avoiding diseases such as Pregnancy Toxaemia and Ketosis for ewes and cows and will improve the survival of progeny.

Maintenance feeds such as oats, hay, silage, by-products and straw can be prioritised for dry sheep, cattle and horses. When dry, these animals can utilise lower quality feeds and still maintain condition.

Metabolisable Energy (ME) required for maintenance of sheep and cattle can be calculated using these equations;

$$\text{Sheep ME} = (\text{Liveweight} \times 12.5\%) + 2.5$$

$$\text{Cattle ME} = (\text{Liveweight} \times 15\%) + 5$$

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Management strategies such as confinement feeding can also be put in place which will reduce the daily maintenance requirements of livestock.

For more in-depth information on sheep and cattle requirements please don't hesitate to get in touch with any of the BLM team, alternatively, the following links will also be a helpful resource.

Sheep www.lifetimewool.com.au/tools/dryfeedbud.aspx

Cattle http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/312735/Beef-cattle-drought-feeding-guide.pdf

[Although this is a drought feeding guide, the principles and information are very relevant.]

Reducing Stress

Stress can cause a host of issues such as dehydration, loss of appetite, compromised immune system and reduced ability to absorb magnesium. Stress causes livestock to not only utilise their energy and water stores at a faster rate, but also their trace element, mineral and vitamin reserves. It's important to replenish these quickly in a way that does not create more stress.

Our mission has always been to be a passionate company who genuinely cares about the livestock industry and we are dedicated to improving the performance, health, and well-being of livestock.

Under these circumstances we are finding that our **BLM Green Cap** product can certainly play a crucial role in the recovery of livestock.

References & Useful Links

Figure 1. https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/96273/Water-requirements-for-sheep-and-cattle.pdf

How bushfires Affect Water Quality; <https://www.waterquality.gov.au/issues/bushfires>

Sheep Requirements; www.lifetimewool.com.au/tools/dryfeedbud.aspx

Cattle Requirements; http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/312735/Beef-cattle-drought-feeding-guide.pdf

The **BLM Green Cap** product provides a rich source of Magnesium to aid in calming the animal. Magnesium coupled with fulvic acid, a powerful electrolyte, helps rehydrate stock to minimise weight loss and stimulate appetite. It will also help stock transition onto new feeds easier because their rumens convert feed more efficiently.

BLM Green Cap can be applied to a trough, tank system or on feed so it's not creating any more stress for the livestock. We recommend treating all surviving livestock with **BLM green Cap**, even if they did not receive injuries as they have still experienced stress during the bushfire event.

It's also important to avoid unnecessary mustering until livestock have recovered enough, keeping in mind the importance of providing adequate water and feed.

If you require assistance or advice on the nutritional welfare of your livestock please don't hesitate to contact our Technical Services Manager, Ash Hunt or any of our BLM team.

Robbie Neale, CEO & Ash Hunt, Technical Services Manager



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