

Drought Relief Assistance Scheme (DRAS)

Transport of Livestock Returning from Agistment Freight Subsidy

The Drought Relief Assistance Scheme (DRAS) is offered by the Queensland Government and is administered by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF). The purpose of the scheme is to assist primary producers whose properties are drought declared to manage the welfare of their livestock during drought, and to restore their herds after drought. This subsidy helps with the cost of returning livestock from agistment once the drought is over.

Eligibility

To apply for this subsidy, you **must** meet the following conditions:

- You are a primary producer. For the purposes of this scheme, a primary producer is a person or a partner in a partnership, company or trust who spends more than 50 per cent of their labour on and derives more than 50 per cent of their gross income from, a primary production enterprise.
- You are a property owner, share-farmer or lessee in the grazing industry (beef cattle, sheep, dairy cattle, goats, deer or horses that are not normally hand-fed).
- The livestock were sent to agistment while your property was within a State drought-declared area or had an Individually Droughted Property (IDP) declaration or were sent to agistment in the two-month period immediately prior to drought declaration.
- You did not introduce any livestock on to the property while it was drought declared or in the three month period prior to the drought declaration, including any livestock taken on for agistment.¹
- Your property has had its drought declaration revoked prior to the introduction of any livestock².
- The agisted livestock are owned by you and are returning to their property of origin.
- The livestock were grazed on your property for at least three months prior to their agistment and the livestock were on agistment for at least two months³.
- The return from agistment follows the most direct practicable route. A distance restriction of 2000 km applies and subsidies will be reduced if this distance restriction is exceeded⁴.

1 The subsidy does not apply when livestock have been introduced or agisted on a drought-declared property except where:

- older core breeding stock have been replaced with female weaners or replacement bulls; or
- a property owner introduces livestock to a drought-declared property from a property under the same ownership but with a different Property Identification Code (PIC) as part of an overall drought-management strategy; or
- you have served a relevant suspension period as outlined in the 'Introduction of livestock – suspension of DRAS' section of this document.

2 This subsidy does apply to the return of breeding stock to a drought declared property when the livestock have been genuinely forced off agistment and documentary evidence is presented with the application that indicates why the animals were forced off agistment.

3 Special consideration may be given if the drought status of your property is revoked within two months of the livestock being agisted.

4 The 2000 km distance restriction applies for movements from 1 July 2018 to the end of the eligibility period for this current drought. For animal transport movements before 1 July 2018, or that relates to future droughts, the distance restriction is 1250km. This distance restriction of 1250km may not apply if it has been extended following a recommendation by the local drought committee (LDC) for the area. In such cases, the LDC will recommend a maximum distance on a case-by-case basis. The maximum distance that can be approved by the LDC is 1500 km and subsidies will be reduced if this distance restriction is exceeded. Any distance restriction to 2000km cannot be extended by the LDC.

- Your application is received in Brisbane within **six months** of the date the livestock returned from agistment.

Please note: - Due to COVID-19, an extension of the timeframe for receipt of claims by DAF from 6 months to 12 months will apply to invoices dated from and including 11 September 2019 for claims received from and including 11 March 2020. This extension will be reviewed on 11 September 2020. It does not apply to invoices already submitted to DAF and declined prior to 11 March 2020. This extension was reviewed on 11 September 2020 and will now apply up to 31 December 2020.

The subsidy applies to:

- The return movement of all stock (breeders, non-breeders and those animals born while on agistment) in the 12 months after revocation of your drought status. In special circumstances, this can be extended to 24 months following approval by the LDC.
- Return movements from the furthest point of agistment to the home property. Where stock are re-registered to a property that is further away from the home property than the first point of agistment, the subsidy applies to the return movement from the furthest point of agistment to the home property by the most direct route.

Ineligibility

The subsidy does not apply:

- when livestock are returned while your property is still drought declared⁵
- to the return movement of livestock from a stock route
- to the transport of livestock from agistment to any other place other than the property of origin, for example, the subsidy does not apply to the transport of livestock from agistment directly to saleyards or feedlots
- to invoices submitted from entities related to the applicant, such as a family member or company owned by the applicant (for example, livestock moved by a hired carrier owned by the applicant).

Introduction of livestock — suspension from DRAS

This subsidy does not apply when livestock have been returned, introduced or agisted on a drought-declared property. When this occurs, access to all DRAS assistance measures will be suspended from the date the animals are introduced to the property and for an additional 16 weeks after the livestock, or an equivalent number, have left the property.

Non-breeders that are returned because they have been genuinely forced off agistment may remain on your drought-declared property for up to one month while further agistment is sought, before the suspension period begins.

Breeders genuinely forced off agistment and returned do not incur the 16-week suspension, provided a statutory declaration is presented with the application that indicates why the animals were forced off agistment. This is approved by DAF on a case-by-case basis.

Breeders not forced off agistment that are returned to your drought-declared property can remain on your property for a maximum of four weeks while further agistment is found, without incurring a 16-week suspension.

⁵ This subsidy does apply to the return of breeding stock to a drought-declared property when the livestock have been genuinely forced off agistment and documentary evidence is presented with the application that indicates why the animals were forced off agistment.

Weaners up to six months old can be returned to your property while it is still drought declared if weaning facilities are not available on the agistment property. A statutory declaration from the agisting property owner is required to support this.

All suspensions are lifted from the property when the drought declaration is revoked.

Subsidy rates

Subsidy rates are provided for information purposes only; you do not have to make your own calculations. Subsidies will be calculated by DAF and paid out at the following rates⁶:

<i>Hired carrier</i>	<i>Breeders & their progeny – 100% of the total freight cost Non-breeders – 75% of the total freight cost</i>
<i>Private vehicle</i>	<i>Cattle & horses – breeders – 120 cents / kilometre / 12.2 m deck Cattle & horses – non-breeders – 90 cents / kilometre / 12.2 m deck Sheep – breeders – 67 cents / kilometre / 12.2 m deck Sheep – non-breeders – 50 cents / kilometre / 12.2 m deck</i>
<i>Rail</i>	<i>Breeders & their progeny – 100% of the total freight cost Non-breeders – 75% of the total freight cost</i>
<i>Droving</i>	<i>75% of the cost of a hired drover to a maximum of the hired carrier rate for the movement. Where you as the owner drive the stock, the private vehicle rate for the equivalent distance applies.</i>

All subsidies will be paid out to a maximum charge in line with the current average rates per 12.2 m deck as approved by DAF. Other deck lengths are calculated on a pro-rata basis.

Companies that own the property and use vehicles from a subsidiary company will be paid at the private carrier rate, not the hired carrier rate.

How to apply

Application forms are available online at daf.qld.gov.au or can be posted or emailed to you if you contact the Customer Service Centre on 13 25 23. Keep a copy of your tax invoices for your records and submit completed application forms and tax invoices to the DAF Brisbane office at the below address. Please post applications to:

*Drought Relief Assistance Scheme
Department of Agriculture and Fisheries
Level 12
GPO Box 46
Brisbane Qld 4001*

Or email to: droughtdeclarations@daf.qld.gov.au

Supporting documents

DAF is unable to process applications without copies of all tax invoices and waybills that relate to the transport of the livestock returning from agistment. Please include copies of all tax invoices with your application. Remember to keep a copy of the application for yourself, as tax invoices and supporting documentation will not be returned to you.

⁶ Non-breeders returning to a drought-declared property are not eligible for freight subsidy.

For **hired carrier** transport, please attach freight tax invoices for all livestock movements and waybills for both the forward and return journeys, detailing the number and class of livestock, and the date of movement.

For **private vehicle** transport, please attach a statutory declaration stating:

- deck length
- number of decks
- number of stock returned
- class of stock returned
- date of movement
- distance travelled from the agistment property.

For **private vehicle** transport, also attach written evidence of agistment, including:

- number of class of livestock
- period of agistment
- proof of payment of agistment fees
- waybills for the forward and return journey.

For **rail** transport, please attach all tax invoices and waybills.

For **droving**, please attach written evidence of agistment, including:

- number of class of livestock
- period of agistment
- proof of payment of agistment fees
- waybills for the forward and return journey.

For **droving**, also attach droving tax invoices or, when you as the owner carry out the droving, a statutory declaration detailing number and class of livestock and distance travelled.

Minimum and maximum payments

The minimum payment for each application is \$25. No payment will be made for any claims under this amount.

The maximum level of financial assistance available under DRAS is initially \$20,000 per property, per financial year. **For the purposes of this scheme, all properties or land parcels included under a single Property Identification Code (PIC) are considered to be one property.** This scheme does not allow the splitting of partnerships, properties or land parcels to access more than the prescribed maximum amount.

The initial \$20,000 limit may be extended to \$30,000 if a Drought Management Plan (DMP) for your property is endorsed by a DAF officer. Once a DMP is endorsed, the \$30,000 ceiling applies to the entirety of the current financial year and subsequent financial years. When a property with an endorsed DMP is in its third or subsequent year of being drought declared, the maximum allowable limit per financial year increases from \$30,000 to \$40,000. When a property with an endorsed DMP is in its sixth and subsequent year of being drought declared, the maximum allowable limit per financial year increases to \$50,000.⁷

Once a drought declaration is revoked, the DRAS ceiling is the level the property was on immediately prior to the revocation of the drought declaration and remains at that level for the period that the property is

⁷ When a property with an endorsed DMP is in its sixth and subsequent year of being drought declared, the maximum allowable limit per financial year increases to \$50,000. This increase is eligible from 1 July 2018 only.

eligible to apply for DRAS. For example, if a property with an approved DMP was in the third year of being drought declared when the property is revoked the DRAS ceiling is \$40,000.

Properties without a DMP prior to revocation can obtain a DMP, and the DRAS ceiling limit will be \$30,000 regardless of the length of the drought declaration. For example, if a property without a DMP was in its third or subsequent year of drought prior to revocation, the producer can apply for a ceiling extension to the limit of \$30,000.

Where you have received a payment that you are not eligible to receive, DAF reserves the right to pursue reimbursement, which may include reclaiming funds from any future eligible DRAS applications that you submit.

Processing times

DAF aims to process 90% of claims within 21 working days. Incomplete claims or claims that do not clearly meet the eligibility requirements may take longer. To ensure your claim is processed as quickly as possible, please make sure you have provided all of the required information and that you meet the eligibility criteria.

Payment method

DAF's preferred method of payment is direct electronic transfer into your bank account; however, you may request payment by cheque. You can indicate on your form which method you would prefer.

Assessment

DAF will consider all applications for the transport of livestock returning from agistment freight subsidy received within **six months** of the date of transport.

Applications will be assessed against the eligibility criteria. DAF reserves the right to request further information from you or from any business or individual you have engaged, to assist in assessing your application and to verify any information provided in your application. Failure to provide such information may result in DAF refusing your application. DAF also reserves the right to refuse an application, at its discretion, for any reason or for no reason irrespective of whether the eligibility criteria have been met.

DAF may consult with members of your local drought committee to assist in assessing your claim.

Applications submitted may be subject to audit by DAF, or its agents, in order to determine compliance with scheme guidelines.

Fraudulent applications

By signing the application form, you are declaring that the information provided in the application form and supporting documentation is true and accurate. Providing inaccurate, untrue or misleading information may be a breach of criminal law for which serious penalties may apply. If any information provided in an application or supporting documentation is found to be inaccurate, untrue or misleading, legal action may be taken against you, including action to recover the subsidy.

Appeal and review process

If you are declined DRAS assistance because your claim was received by DAF outside of the eligible time limit, you can request a re-consideration by writing to the Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and outlining the reasons why your application was late. Payment of a declined claim may be

approved at the Minister's discretion, if the Minister considers that there are extenuating circumstances that contributed to the late submission.

If you are declined DRAS assistance because DAF officers believe you do not meet the eligibility criteria (for example, DAF officers believe you do not qualify as a 'primary producer'), you may request re-consideration by writing to the Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and outlining the reasons why you believe you are eligible and including any additional supporting evidence. Payment of a declined claim may be approved at the Minister's discretion, if the Minister considers that the evidence provided by you demonstrates that you meet the eligibility criteria.

Producer responsibilities

While this scheme is to help you to manage the welfare of your animals, it does not discharge you from your legal responsibilities under the *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001*. You should continue to manage the welfare of your animals; either by continuing to destock, by supplementary feeding or by carrying water, until such time as conditions on your property improve.

Guidelines

These guidelines are correct at the time of publishing. DAF reserves the right to amend, alter or change these guidelines at any time, and it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that they check the relevant website frequently. The guidelines that apply to your application will be the guidelines that are current at the time your application is received by DAF.

While DAF has taken all care in preparing these guidelines, DAF will not be liable in any way for any errors, omissions or variation to information in these guidelines or for not advising an applicant of any errors, omissions or variations to information in these guidelines.

DAF may cancel or suspend this scheme at any time.