

Drought Relief Assistance Scheme (DRAS)

Transport of Fodder Freight Subsidy

The Drought Relief Assistance Scheme (DRAS) is offered by the Queensland Government and 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. The transport of fodder subsidy helps with the cost of transporting fodder to drought affected livestock and applies to the loaded portion of the journey only.

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).
- Your property was within a State drought-declared area or had a current Individually Droughted Property (IDP) declaration on the date the transport occurred.
- You have not introduced any livestock on to the property during the current drought or in the three-month period prior to the drought declaration, including any livestock taken on for agistment.¹
- The fodder is used to feed grazing livestock permanently residing on the property.
- The total amount of fodder purchased and on hand does not exceed the minimum amount needed to supplementary feed drought-affected livestock for three months.
- The fodder is transported from the closest source that is practically available. A distance restriction of 2,000 km exists on all types of fodder and subsidies will be reduced if this distance restriction is exceeded.²
- The fodder is transported by hired carrier, private vehicle, ship or rail.
- Your application is received in Brisbane within **six months** of the date the fodder was transported.

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 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
- the property owner has served a relevant suspension period as per outlined in the Introduction of 'Introduction of livestock – suspension of DRAS' section of this document.

² The 2000 km distance restriction applies for fodder movements from 1 July 2018 to the end of the current drought. For fodder movements before 1 July 2018, or in future droughts, the distance restriction is 1000km. This distance restriction of 1,000km 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. The 1000 km distance restriction may not apply to the transport of molasses; however, a 2000 km limit applies on the combined land and sea transport of molasses. Any distance restriction to 2000km cannot be extended by the LDC.

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 transport of:

- fodder for beef cattle, sheep, dairy cattle, goats and deer
- fodder for working and breeding horses, providing they are not normally hand-fed
- grain, hay, urea, molasses (and other supplements approved by DAF) used to feed drought-affected livestock
- the two major components of the purchased feed from the original point of purchase by the miller/manufacturer to the feed mill
- fodder purchased from merchants/agents including from the point of purchase by the merchant to their premises, and from the merchant's premises to your property.

Ineligibility

The subsidy does not apply:

- to transport of fodder grown and/or stored by the applicant or a related entity such as a family member or company owned by the applicant
- to transport of fodder for horses used for leisure/pleasure
- to transport of fodder for intensive livestock, commercial and opportunity feedlots such as piggeries, cattle feedlots or chicken sheds
- to transport of fodder for stock on agistment
- to any form of production feeding, including feeding of stud stock at above-survival levels, except where a 20 per cent subsidy rate applies (see below)
- where stock numbers are considered by DAF or the local drought committee (LDC) to be higher than the average stocking rates of similar enterprises in the area
- where fodder is transported between properties under the same ownership or owned by an entity related to the applicant. This includes properties that are leased by the same individuals, companies or their subsidiaries. However, consideration will be given to applications for movements between properties under the same ownership but with different PICs and where fodder supplies are purchased with the management of both properties in mind, and are initially transported to property 'A' and then a portion is moved to property 'B'
- to fodder on-sold to a third party.

Introduction of livestock — suspension from DRAS

This subsidy does not generally 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.

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 rates:

<i>Hired Carrier</i>	<i>Either 50% of the loaded portion of the transport cost, or 20 cents / tonne / kilometre (whichever is the lower amount)³</i>
<i>Private Vehicle</i>	<i>11 cents / tonne / kilometre</i>
<i>Rail</i>	<i>50% of the loaded portion of the transport cost</i>
<i>Ship</i>	<i>50% of the loaded portion of shipping costs on consignments approved by DAF</i>

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

20 per cent subsidy rate

The transport of fodder for livestock that are normally hand-fed may be eligible for a subsidy rate of 20 per cent. For example, this would apply to the transport of fodder for stud bulls that are normally hand-fed, and for horses used in a commercial breeding operation. This only applies to the proportion of fodder (as determined by DAF) that exceeds the amount that would normally be fed.

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*

³ From 1 July 2018, the subsidy rate for Hired carrier increased from either 50% of the loaded portion of the transport cost, or 13 cents / tonne / kilometre (whichever is the lower amount) to 50% of the loaded portion of the transport cost, or 20 cents / tonne / kilometre (whichever is the lower amount).

Level 6

GPO Box 46

Brisbane Qld 4001

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

Supporting documents

DAF is unable to process freight subsidy applications without copies of all tax invoices that relate to the purchase and transport of the fodder. Please include copies of all tax invoices with your application. It is useful if the invoices show fodder descriptions, weights, points of purchase and distance travelled. Remember to keep a copy of the application for yourself, as tax invoices will not be returned to you.

If your fodder has been donated to you, please provide the details (including approximate weight and type of fodder) in a statutory declaration and attach to your claim.

If you are a Queensland Rail (QR)/Aurizon account customer, attach your copy of the consignment note (advice of goods/gate pass), the QR/Aurizon invoice and your receipt or statement showing payment.

Miller/manufacturer or merchant/agent claims

If you are claiming for the transportation of the two major components in the feed mix from the point of purchase to the miller/manufacturer's premises, you must attach a feed miller/manufacturer's declaration with your application. This declaration must show the proportion of each component the manufacturer has used in your mix. The freight cost is calculated by taking the weight of this proportion and multiplying it by the freight cost per tonne. Information to calculate this cost comes from the declaration. This declaration no longer requires certification by an authorised witness/Justice of the Peace.

If you are claiming for the transportation of fodder from point of purchase by a merchant/agent to the merchant/agent's premises and then on to your property, you must attach a fodder merchant/agent's declaration with your application. This declaration no longer requires certification by an authorised witness/Justice of the Peace.

Both of these declarations are available at daf.qld.gov.au or can be posted or emailed to you if you contact the Customer Service Centre on 13 25 23.

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 \$50,000.⁴

⁴ 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.

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 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 per cent 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 fodder 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 without notice.