



Meeting of the Hawke's Bay Drought Committee

Date: Tuesday 17 March 2020
Time: 4.00pm
Venue: CDEM
Lyndon Road
HASTINGS

Agenda

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1.	Welcome/ Apologies	
2.	Confirmation of Minutes of the Drought Committee meeting held on 10 March 2020	
Information or Performance Monitoring		
3.	Drought Declaration	3
4.	Ministry for Primary Industries Update	
5.	Feed Coordination Update	
6.	Psychosocial Support Update	
7.	HBRC Update - Climate & Weather, Catchment Management, Online Information Hub	
8.	Drought Committee Representation and Participation	
9.	Next Steps and Agreed Actions	

HAWKE'S BAY REGIONAL COUNCIL

DROUGHT COMMITTEE

Tuesday 17 March 2020

Item 3

Subject: DROUGHT DECLARATION

Reason for Report

1. This item provides the Minister's media release declaring a large scale drought event, for members' information, as well as the 'quick facts' sheet previously circulated to committee members.

Decision Making Process

2. Staff have assessed the requirements of the Local Government Act 2002 in relation to this item and have concluded that, as this report is for information only, the decision making provisions do not apply.

Recommendation

That the HB Drought Committee receives the "Drought Declaration" information.

Authored by:

Leeanne Hooper
GOVERNANCE LEAD

Approved by:

Joanne Lawrence
GROUP MANAGER OFFICE OF THE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND CHAIR

James Palmer
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Attachment/s

- [↓1](#) Minister's Drought Declaration Media Release
- [↓2](#) Large Scale Drought Event Quick Facts

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12 MARCH 2020

Government unlocks \$2 million drought relief for farmers, growers

**HON DAMIEN O'CONNOR**(/MINISTER/HON-DAMIEN-O%E2%80%99CONNOR)[Agriculture \(/portfolio/labour-led-government-2017-2020/agriculture\)](/portfolio/labour-led-government-2017-2020/agriculture)[Rural Communities \(/portfolio/labour-led-government-2017-2020/rural-communities\)](/portfolio/labour-led-government-2017-2020/rural-communities)

Agriculture Minister Damien O'Connor has today classified the drought in the North Island, parts of the South Island and the Chathams as a large-scale adverse event, unlocking up to \$2 million in Government funding to support farmers and growers from now until June 2021.

The last large-scale adverse event classification for drought was in 2013.

"The intensity of the drought and its spread across multiple regions has affected many people and their livelihoods," O'Connor said.

The \$2 million package includes:

- drought coordinators and additional coordinators where needed;
- a feed working group;
- expanded psychosocial support, including \$90,000 for Hawke's Bay and Wairarapa;
- animal welfare information and expertise; and
- professional advice for recovery.

"This new funding allows us to boost co-ordination efforts and activate some additional recovery measures, including for animal welfare and wider rural communities, while also ensuring there is funding to respond to future adverse events," he said.

<https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/government-unlocks-2-million-drought-relief-farmers-growers>

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Attachment 1

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Government unlocks \$2 million drought relief for farmers, growers | Beehive.govt.nz

The classification covers the entire North Island along with the top of the South Island (Tasman, Marlborough, Kaikoura), North Canterbury and the Chatham Islands.

Drought relief has been extended to cover the Wairarapa and Hawke's Bay regions with \$90,000 in funding available for local Rural Support Trusts to assist primary sector communities, provide farm management advice and animal welfare support.

"Farmers and growers have shown that they are able to roll with the punches and most have been well-prepared for these types of events, but as the weeks go by without significant rain in many parts of the country, there is a cumulative impact," O'Connor said.

"It's getting very hard for people to keep planning for, and it puts pressure on rural communities."

Despite recent rain across parts of the North Island, many rural people remain under pressure with water shortages and low feed availability, he said.

"It will take more than a few sprinklings of rain to get out of drought."

To date, the Government has provided more than \$300,000 to support drought-stricken regions:

- Northland and North Auckland - \$80,000;
- Waikato and South Auckland - \$80,000; and
- Gisborne, Manawatu, Rangitikei, and Tararua districts - \$150,000.

Additionally the Defence Force has helped deliver water to towns and the Government has committed \$2 million to set up temporary water supplies in Kaikohe and Kaitaia.

"With several requests for regional declarations of drought received in the past few weeks, it's become clear that many farmers and growers in the North Island and parts of the South Island are facing very difficult dry conditions," O'Connor said.

Tailored packages will be developed to suit each region's needs. For those already in a medium-scale event, there will be funding for additional drought co-ordinators if needed, as well as access to recovery advice for affected primary sector businesses.

"Funding for psychosocial support in affected regions will also be boosted, and we'll be working closely with farmers to help ensure the welfare of animals in their care."

Note to Editors

Criteria for classifying a large-scale adverse event

There are three levels of 'adverse events' – localised, medium and large. These can cover events like drought, floods, fire, earthquakes and other natural disasters. The criteria for assessing the scale of an adverse event are:

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- Options available for the community to prepare for and recover from the event;
- Magnitude of the event (likelihood and scale of physical impact), and;
- Capacity of the community to cope economically and socially impact.

MPI uses several criteria to help classify a drought as a large-scale adverse event, including the geographic extent and level of impacts of the drought, and whether farmers are coping and still have options to manage through it, such as access to supplementary feed.

Recovery Assistance Measures may include:

Recovery facilitator(s): A recovery facilitator may be needed to co-ordinate response and recovery initiatives with various agencies, usually working alongside the Rural Support Trust.

Psychosocial support and community events: Rural Support Trusts manage events and extra outreach to help get farmers off-farm, reduce isolation and improve morale. They can also point people in the direction of specific help: financial, health, or otherwise.

Inland Revenue assistance: Tax relief measures may be made available on a case-by-case basis. These could include flexibility on tax dates, or income equalisation.

Enhanced Task Force Green: A labour assistance scheme that can be launched for clean-up and repairs.

Technology transfer costs: Grants may be provided for education and technical advice on recovery options relating to financial and contingency planning, including animal welfare.

Rural assistance payments (RAPs): Payments to families affected by specific events when their farm or orchard business can't meet essential living needs. These payments are set at 100% of the unemployment benefit level.

More information on adverse events is available at: <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/protection-and-response/responding/adverse-events/> (<https://www.mpi.govt.nz/protection-and-response/responding/adverse-events/>)

Phone the Rural Support Trust 0800 RURAL HELP (0800 787 254)



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Quick Facts on the Large-Scale Adverse Event Classification for Drought

Classification of this drought as a large-scale event

- The Minister has classified the drought as a large-scale adverse event because of its intensity, its spread across multiple regions, and because some of the usual risk management options have been disrupted by COVID19.
- This classification allows us to boost coordination of effort on the ground in the regions and activates some additional recovery measures.

The area covered by the classification

- The area classified covers all of the North Island and the top of the South Island (Marlborough, Tasman, Kaikōura) down to North Canterbury (Hurunui, Waimakariri), and the Chatham Islands. All of these areas are being closely monitored for the impacts from drought and were likely to seek assistance if the drought conditions continued.
- Although some of those regions have not yet requested drought assistance, this allows us to work with them proactively because they are likely to be in drought within a few weeks.

Who will be covered by this support?

- Farmers and growers, workers, and their families in the agriculture, horticulture and forestry primary sectors
- People who have animals where they are affected by the drought
- People in rural communities, including those on lifestyle blocks, small holdings and homesteads.

What support will be made available?

- This will depend on a community's needs, and rural initiatives already underway. Support can include:
 - Drought co-ordinators on the ground to co-ordinate response and recovery initiatives with various agencies, usually working alongside the Rural Support Trust, Council, CDEM, industry organisations, and community groups in the area.
 - Additional drought co-ordinators if needed, to support remote communities or key groups, such as lifestyle blocks, small holdings and homesteads, or specific issues, such as feed coordination.
 - Psychosocial support and community events to help get people connecting, sharing information, reducing isolation and supporting well-being.
 - Rural assistance payments (RAPs) available to farmers and growers, whose families are impacted by this event when income from their primary sector business is affected and they can't meet essential living needs. These payments are set at the rate of the Jobseeker support benefit and administered by Work & Income.
 - Inland Revenue is exercising discretion to allow late deposits and early withdrawal from the income equalisation scheme. More information is available online: <https://www.ird.govt.nz/Updates/News-Folder/gisborne-tararua-drought-impacts>
 - Access to up to \$5,000 of professional recovery advice for affected primary sector businesses. It is primarily for long term planning and recovery once drought conditions ease. MPI will administer the programme, which will be run in a similar way to the Kaikōura earthquake recovery advice, and will take applications from June.
- A national Feed Working Group with industry organisations and others to ensure people can access animal feed from where it is available.

- Coordination of animal welfare advice and initiatives for farmers, animal owners and rural communities. <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/39914-animals-affected-by-dry-or-drought-conditions>

The Government will not be covering commercial financial losses nor is it the insurer of last resort. It will not fund the provision of feed or water itself. Primary industry businesses need to factor climate variations into their business plans.

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Attachment 2