



GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE FOR CLIMATIC EVENTS AND NATURAL DISASTERS IMPACTING ON-FARM

WHAT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF INDIVIDUALS?

Individuals need to plan and prepare for adverse events. One of the best ways to speed recovery and build your business and family's resilience is to think ahead and be prepared. You should consider the risks you face from adverse events and develop strategies to protect your family and business from those risks. These risk management strategies might include:

- » setting aside reserves of money, food and livestock feed;
- » owning a generator;
- » keeping insurance up to date;
- » locating buildings and planting crops away from areas of high risk;
- » planting drought-resistant crops and planting trees on highly erodible land;
- » keeping stock in good health; and
- » considering climatic risks and natural hazards when purchasing land.

Individuals are also responsible for safeguarding the welfare of their livestock, including the humane disposal of livestock. Under the Animal Welfare Act 1999, the responsibility for ensuring the health and welfare of animals rests with the owner or the person in charge of the animals. Farmers are urged to make timely decisions to avoid problems. You can seek advice from Federated Farmers, veterinarians, stock and feed agents and farm advisers.

WHAT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF RURAL COMMUNITIES?

Community members need to work together to manage local and regional adverse events. A community may be:

- » a small group of farmers living in an isolated valley;
- » a sector group in a region; or
- » all of the people occupying a district or a region.

Community planning and co-operation is crucial to reducing the effects of an adverse event on rural individuals and communities. Rural communities can reduce risk by:

- » knowing who your neighbours are and how to contact them;
- » actively working with your community to promote readiness and reduction of risks caused by adverse events, which includes having a plan for when an event occurs (such as a meeting place with an emergency kit, a plan to ensure stock still have access to feed, water and can be milked if access is limited, and a contact list of neighbours, local Civil Defence, Rural Support Trust and essential service providers such as your power company).

Individual and rural communities have responsibilities for preparing and responding to adverse climatic events or natural disasters that affect farming families (agriculture, horticulture, forestry and aquaculture). These events include floods, storm events, snow events, droughts, tornadoes, earthquakes, tsunamis or volcanic eruptions.

This document outlines the responsibilities of individuals and communities and what central government recovery assistance measures may be available in localised, medium-scale and large-scale adverse events impacting on-farm.

An adverse event may be declared a civil defence emergency by the local council. However, it is important to remember that the availability of the assistance outlined below is not dependent on the declaration of a civil defence emergency. The Minister for Primary Industries will declare the adverse event if medium-scale or larger, however, localised recovery measures are available at any time based on an individual's circumstances.

RURAL SUPPORT TRUSTS

Rural Support Trusts are a nationwide network which assists rural communities and individuals during and following adverse events such as floods and droughts. As well as this, a number of the trusts also provide their services in times of general hardship. The services that the trusts provide vary depending on funding and focus, but in general they offer co-ordination of an initial response to an event, help rural people decide business options, provide mentors or colleagues from rural backgrounds to talk to, act as advocates for financial assistance, advocate for assistance from Work and Income programmes (like welfare support), and provide stress management services. If the trust does not offer particular services themselves they will have contacts with appropriate individuals and organisations that can assist.

Rural Support Trusts work closely with local Civil Defence Emergency Management groups by assisting and supporting them to coordinate activities in rural areas. The Trusts also work closely with other rural organisations such as Rural Women NZ, Federated Farmers, Forest Owners' Association, Farm Forestry Association and Horticulture New Zealand.

Following an adverse event of any size, your regional Rural Support Trust can provide information and assistance in receiving available support. Contact details for the Rural Support Trusts can be found on the last page of this document.

RESTORATION OF ESSENTIAL COMMUNITY SERVICES

Local government is responsible for restoring community services such as roading, water supplies and flood protection.

Central government is responsible for state highway restoration through Transit NZ.

Telecommunication and line companies are responsible for restoring phone and power supplies

GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE LOCALISED EVENTS

Every year there are periods of disruptive weather or localised adverse climatic events that affect a relatively small number of farms. Communities should first organise a local response with local government and community groups such as their local Rural Support Trust. However, farming families severely affected may qualify for the following central government assistance:

TAX RELIEF (MAY BE SELF DECLARED)

Inland Revenue has a number of tax relief assistance measures including late deposits or early withdrawals from the income equalisation scheme, late re-estimates of provisional tax, extensions of time for filing, instalment arrangements, and remission of penalties. For more information, contact your tax agent or Inland Revenue.

WORKING FOR FAMILIES ASSISTANCE:

If your income has changed as a result of an adverse event, you may be eligible to receive money through Working for Families. Working for Families package is made up of three components:

- » **WORKING FOR FAMILIES TAX CREDITS:** These are paid to families with children aged 18 years or under to help with the cost of raising a family. They are made up of four types of payments: family tax credit, in-work tax credit, minimum family tax credit and parental tax credit.
- » **CHILDCARE ASSISTANCE:** This can help with the cost of childcare for preschool and school aged children. It is made up of two types of payments: Childcare subsidy; and OSCAR subsidy (out of school care).
- » **ACCOMMODATION SUPPLEMENT:** This can help with the cost of your rent, mortgage, board and other essential household costs. You don't have to have children to get an accommodation supplement.

To see if you're eligible for assistance through Working for Families go to www.workingforfamilies.govt.nz and check how much you could get by using the calculators. You can also call Work and Income for more information on housing and childcare, or Inland Revenue for more information on tax credits.

LABOUR ASSISTANCE:

- » **JOB SEARCH SERVICE:** A service for people who are either working and want to stay in their current job, are looking for a job, or want or need to change careers and/or are interested in training.

HOW CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

The matrix of government response is used as a guide by the government for determining government response, and is classified depending on where the majority of the criteria are met.

		LOCALISED (The majority of the criteria are met within this column)
THEMES	CRITERIA	ASSESSMENT/CLASSIFICATION
RISK MANAGEMENT OPTIONS	Availability of options	Readily available
MAGNITUDE OF EVENT	Likelihood of the event	Frequent
	Scale of physical impact	Local level
CAPACITY OF COMMUNITY TO COPE	Degree of economic impact	Local level
	Degree of social impact	Local level
EXAMPLES		2006 Whangaehu Valley flood 2005 Gisborne flood
POSSIBLE GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE		Small-scale event recovery measures

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE:

Work and Income may provide financial assistance to both farming and non-farming families whose incomes have been affected by an adverse event. This financial assistance may include:

- » **UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT:** This provides income support for people who are looking for work or training for work.
- » **EMERGENCY BENEFIT:** This is an income and asset tested benefit payable to people who are in hardship and who are unable to earn enough income for them-selves (or any dependent family) and cannot receive another benefit.
- » **SPECIAL NEEDS GRANTS:** This provides a non-taxable, one-off recoverable or non-recoverable payment to meet immediate needs.



ASSISTANCE IS TRIGGERED

Determining which recovery measures may be made available. Each event is assessed a fit within each column below.

SCALE OF ADVERSE EVENT		
Criteria	MEDIUM-SCALE (The majority of the criteria sit within this column)	LARGE-SCALE (The majority of the criteria sit within this column)
DESCRIPTION OF THE EVENT		
	Moderately available	No practical options available
	Infrequent	Rare
	District level/multi-district level	Regional/national level
	District level/multi-district level	Regional/national level
	District level/multi-district level	Regional/national level
	2007 Northland storm 2007 North Island East Coast drought 2006 Canterbury snow 2004 Eastern Bay of Plenty flood	2008 National drought 2004 Lower North Island floods 1988 Cyclone Bola
	Small-scale event recovery measures + Medium-scale event recovery measures	Small-scale event recovery measures + Medium-scale event recovery measures + Special Recovery Measure

- » **RECOVERABLE ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS:** This provides non-taxable, interest free, financial assistance to meet essential immediate needs for special items or services. This assistance has to be paid back but may be paid back in instalments.

MENTORING/ADVICE:

Financial negotiation and counselling/mentoring services are available via Rural Support Trusts for families and individuals who need to talk with an independent person experienced in farm, forestry or orchard management. Contact your local Rural Support Trust, or Victim Support on **0800 842 846**.

MEDIUM-SCALE EVENTS

Occasionally there are adverse events that impact on farms and farming families at a district/multi-district scale. Communities and regional organisations are expected to organise local responses. In a medium-scale adverse event central government may provide assistance as outlined above, plus additional assistance including:

RURAL ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS: Work and Income may provide payments to assist with essential living expenses. These payments are set at the same rate as the unemployment benefit; an income and asset test applies. For more information contact your local Work and Income office or a Rural Support Trust.

TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER ASSISTANCE: MPI may provide grants for education workshops, meetings and media information to provide technical and financial advice on options for dealing with adverse events. This technology transfer would often be administered via industry organisations.

COMMUNITY EVENT ASSISTANCE: MPI may provide grants to help sponsor local community events aimed at boosting morale.

RECOVERY FACILITATOR: Facilitators would be appointed to coordinate the initial stages of some recovery operations. They often work via the local Rural Support Trust and help identify at-risk farming families and help these farming families access applicable assistance. For more information contact MPI or your local Rural Support Trust.

LABOUR ASSISTANCE: Enhanced Task Force Green (ETFG) is an enhanced labour assistance scheme that covers the wages of workers and supervisors to help with the clean-up operation in areas where there is too much damage for the local community to manage alone. ETFG can help with clearing trees and debris, repairing fencing, building repairs and general clean-up. ETFG workers can be local jobseekers, students, and workers who may not be able to work because of the damage caused by the storms. ETFG is funded by Work and Income, and organised in partnership with local councils and communities. For more information about ETFG, contact your local Work and Income office or council.

VOLUNTEER COSTS: In some recovery operations, the travel and accommodation costs for volunteers from outside the region are met.

RURAL SUPPORT TRUSTS: In a medium-scale and large scale adverse event Rural Support Trusts' would be funded by MPI to help coordinate many of the activities outlined in this brochure. For more information contact MPI or your local Rural Support Trust.

LARGE-SCALE EVENTS

Occasionally, climatic or natural disasters occur on a significant scale that seriously impacts on the regional and/or national economy. For large-scale adverse events, central government will lead the response and recovery phase in conjunction with local government and may provide additional assistance to that outlined above.

SPECIAL RECOVERY MEASURE

May be made available at the discretion of central government. A Special Recovery Measure would reimburse a share of the costs for:

- » restoration of uninsurable on-farm infrastructure;
- » re-establishment of uninsurable pasture, crops and forestry (excluding slips); and
- » initial clean up of silt and debris (where uninsurable).

Reimbursement would be at a rate of 50 percent, with an excess of \$10 000 or 10 percent of damage costs (whichever is greater). Assistance would be capped at a maximum of \$250 000 per farm business.



REQUESTING GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE:

After an adverse event, if you feel you or your community require government recovery assistance your first port of call would likely be your local Rural Support Trust or industry body representative (such as Federated Farmers or Horticulture NZ). A request for government assistance for recovery can be compiled by this representative and lodged with the Ministry for Primary Industries or Minister for Primary Industries directly. Information required for requesting this recovery assistance is:

- » outline the severity of the event (physical, economic, social);
- » confirm that a local response has occurred; and
- » specify the type of recovery assistance needed.

RURAL SUPPORT TRUST

To find out more about qualifying for assistance and how to request government support.

NORTHLAND/RODNEY	Northland Rural Support Trust
WAIKATO/HAURAKI/COROMANDEL	Waikato/Hauraki/Coromandel Rural Support Trust
BAY OF PLENTY	Bay of Plenty Rural Support Charitable Trust
GISBORNE	East Coast Rural Support Trust (Gisborne)
HAWKES BAY	East Coast Rural Support Trust (Hawke's Bay)
TARARUA	East Coast Rural Support Trust (Tararua)
WAIRARAPA	East Coast Rural Support Trust (Wairarapa/Upper Hutt)
TARANAKI	Taranaki Rural Support Trust
RUAPEHU/WANGANUI	Ruapehu-Wanganui Rural Support Trust
MANAWATU/RANGITIKEI/KAPITI	Manawatu/Rangitikei Rural Family Support Trust
MARLBOROUGH/NELSON	Top of the South Rural Support Trust
WEST COAST	West Coast Rural Support Trust
NORTH CANTERBURY	North Canterbury Rural Support Trust
MID-CANTERBURY	Mid-Canterbury Emergency Relief Trust
SOUTH CANTERBURY	South Canterbury Adverse Event Trust
OTAGO	Otago Adverse Events Support Trust
SOUTHLAND	Southland Rural Support Trust



To contact a Rural Support Trust near you, please call:

0800 787 254

(0800 RURAL HELP)

www.rural-support.org.nz

OTHER RELEVANT GOVERNMENT AGENCY CONTACTS

GOVERNMENT AGENCY	SERVICE	TELEPHONE
INLAND REVENUE	Emergency line	0800 473 566
	General enquiries	0800 227 774
	Working for Families (eg tax credits assistance)	0800 227 773
WORK AND INCOME	General enquiries	0800 559 009
	Working for Families	0800 774 004
MPI	General enquiries and animal welfare complaints	0800 008 333
0800 GOVERNMENT HELPLINE	Only available when activated – depending on scale of event	0800 779 997

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