

# Agriculture Recovery Update

Stewarton, Lake Rowan and Creightons Creek

January 8, 2015

Edition 1

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## Agriculture Recovery Committee

As we transition from fighting the fires to immediate relief and then into medium and long term recovery, there are lots of agencies, organisations and community groups that want to help land holders get back on their feet. In order to coordinate the recovery efforts and in particular agricultural needs over the coming months the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (formerly DEPI) will lead the coordination of a Agriculture Recovery Committee.

The committee will bring together the parties involved with the recovery efforts specifically around agricultural issues. Ashley Paech, Program Manager Meat and Wool Hume, DED, will chair the committee and will provide regular updates to land holders on behalf of the committee.



**Ashley Paech**, Program Manager Meat and Wool Hume, [Ashley.paech@depi.vic.gov.au](mailto:Ashley.paech@depi.vic.gov.au),

02 60 304 566      0408 562 983

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## Protecting private dams and rain water tanks

With coming rainfall events there is going to be every chance of water run-off from burnt paddocks into dams and from roof tops into water tanks, and with that water will come debris such as soot, ash, leaves, manures and vegetation. Depending on how heavy the rain is we may also see soil, rocks and small branches being shifted on steeper slopes.

Debris in your water supply has the potential to foul your water making it unsuitable for human and/or livestock consumption. Small amounts of soil and silt in dams will make your water muddy in the short term but should eventually settle to the bottom, down the track these dams may require de-silting but shouldn't cause too many concerns. However, excessive vegetation and manures in dams can cause the water to become rank and unsuitable for stock. The vegetation will begin to break down and use up the oxygen in the water in the process, eventually to the water becomes stagnant and rank, this is known as black water and can make livestock sick.

Tips for protecting your dams and rain water tanks are firstly, if it's safe to do so, disconnect the down pipes from houses and sheds for the first lot of rainfall until the roof and gutters have been flushed of debris, then reconnect for subsequent rainfall events. To protect dams it is possible to set up structures that can help to trap sediment and debris and slow the water down prior to reaching the dam. Materials such as old star pickets, burnt netting, shade cloth or straw bales can be used to create traps ahead of the dam.

For information and assistance on setting up sediment structures to protect dams check out this youtube video and fact sheet or contact Greg Bekker (DEDJTR) 0417 340 236 or Kerry Robson at the Gecko Clan 0418 140 710



<http://www.depi.vic.gov.au/fire-and-emergencies/recovery-after-an-emergency/farm-and-land-recovery-after-bushfire>

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## Keeping an eye on animal health issues

A couple weeks have passed now since the fire events and any stock that were severely injured have been treated or disposed of. In terms of un-injured stock, some producers took the opportunity to sell livestock direct to the abattoir, others have arranged agistment and some have organised fodder to feed on farm. For those who have kept stock it is important to at some stage re-assess those animals for any symptoms or damage that may not have been obvious at the initial assessment.

Things that could arise following the fire are: scalding on the teats and udders of sheep and cows which will impact on their ability to support calves and lambs; scarring of the vulva on females which may have an impact when it comes to joining this year; and heat stress on the males testicles, if the testes become over heated their sperm count may be affected rendering them infertile for 2-3 months until they replenish their sperm supplies.

If you require further assistance with these issues contact John Ryan (DEDJTR Vet) on 0400 023 398

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## **Calculating feed requirements for livestock**

Since the fires a number of semi loads of fodder have been donated and distributed through the depots which were set up across the fire areas. This fodder has been gratefully received and will allow producers a little more time to make some decisions about their livestock. But those donations will soon run out and producers will need to make decisions about do I keep my stock and am I prepared to feed them through to Autumn or do I sell now and buy stock back later in the year.

Over the coming weeks DEDJTR staff will be assisting the Gecko Clan to run some feed budgeting days where we can help producers answer questions such as: How long will my hay last? How much hay or grain do I need to buy? And What quality of hay should I be buying? The first of these events will be held on Thursday January 15 in the Goorambat area, further details to come.

In the meantime if you need immediate help with these sort of question contact Ashley Paech (DEDJTR) 0408 562 983 or Greg Bekker (DEDJTR) 0417 340 236

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## **Upcoming events**

### **Fencing demonstration day**

(Waratah fencing demonstrations, sediment fences and stock containment areas)

Opposite Creightons Creek Hall, Wednesday January 14, 11 am

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