

Dairy floods checklist

Preparing and responding to floods



0800 4 DairyNZ (0800 4 324 7969)

 Sustainable
Farming Fund

DairyNZ 

Dairy Flood Response Checklist

Northland farmers' experience has been used to put this checklist together. The flood checklist is meant for farmers and rural professionals as a planning guide to assist business preparedness given the frequency of adverse weather. The extra boxes allow you to add important data specific for your farm.

Pre-flood preparation (“Business Continuity Planning”)

Infrastructure:

- Provide accessible storage for supplement above flood level
- Upgrade feed-pads and stand-off area to a standard that supports stock during a flood. This allows high feed utilisation
- Wire cowshed to run on a generator (know specs on suitable generators)
- Purchase generator or know where to hire one
- Ensure water pumps are above flood level
- Ensure chemical storage is above flood level (herbicides etc)
- Ensure sufficient effluent storage, and empty ponds early autumn
- Access to machinery (on hand or contract) – e.g. cultivation equipment, PTO pumps, stock crates, trough cleaning
- Have adequate insurance cover and understand the fine print
- When replacing fences in likely flood plain, use 1-2 wire electric
- Upgrade drainage on the farm; especially wet/flood-prone paddocks
- Subscribe to the met service's text service adverse event warnings. Heed weather warnings and move stock to Higher Ground.
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Feed:

- Maintain high reserves of supplement or have in place options for bringing in and feeding out other supplement
- Balance feed wedge between flood plain and higher ground
- Improve carrying capacity of hills by upgrading fencing, pastures, water supply and access
- Secure additional land for grazing off outside the flood district
- Have a flexible stock policy so you can off-load stock quickly.
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Other:

- Remember your Civil Defence information (on inside back cover of phone book)
- Have a flood response plan, review it and familiarise with your staff
- Ensure you have a car charger for cell phones
- Ensure you have a landline telephone that doesn't need power to function
- Know your neighbours and their contact details
- Make sure new neighbours are aware of flood risks for district
- Subscribe to weather warnings
- Listen to local radio station for more information
- Move stock to higher ground when flood warning given.
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Immediate response

- *Make sure you, your family and staff are safe*
- *Account for all stock after the storm.*

Assess:

- Condition and health of stock
- Extent of flooding and impact on pastures
- Feed on-hand
 - pasture – non flooded (assess this daily)
 - supplements – if short buy in extra feed on quality/utilisation
- Condition of cowshed, races, fences and water supply
- Power supply – assess expected time to be reconnected.
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Action:

- Develop a plan/strategy, set priorities and assign responsibilities
- Keep your staff involved. Tick off and discuss the plan
- Reduce the stocking rate on your milking platform or use supplement
 - cull your cull cows early
 - graze off dry stock and replacements where possible
 - consider drying off milkers or going OAD
- When supplementing stock – watch for metabolic problems
- Assist neighbours.
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Long-term farm recovery

Think about where you want to be and when, then work backwards. Ask for help

Stock:

Regularly check stock that are being grazed off-farm – check their condition, supplement if necessary

Provide minerals. Monitor copper levels

Monitor stock condition and weight.



Pasture:

Pasture under water for 7-10 days may need resowing

Seek advice on regrassing and take soil samples for fertiliser

Once water is off paddocks remove dead pasture by grazing, mowing or mulching

Ground conditions must be firm before sowing seed and soil temp > 10°C

Due to the extent of regrassing required, drilling may be the preferred option

In autumn both spray-drill or drilling-only will be successful

In spring due to the Poa Annuua and Penny Royal infestation, spray and drill for better long-term results

Monitor pasture state in future seasons – undersow if necessary.

Monitor pests and insect damage eg. armyworm, springtail etc.





Tips

- Annuals will provide more early feed but will not persist. Perennials will give a slow but more long-term feed supply
- Treated seed has proven to be more successful than untreated
- Nitrogen and sulphur fertiliser post-flooding stimulated growth

Monitor daily

Support your farm team and keep them updated as your plans change.

It may seem like the end of the world but time will heal the farm. New pasture means more quality and quantity feed leading to higher milk production and profit.



Important contacts

Fonterra	Milk supply	0800 656 568
DairyNZ	Technical advice	0800 4 324 7969
LIC	Stock movement records	
Stock trucks	Stock transportation	
Northland Rural Support Trust	Response assistance - Enhanced Task Force Green (ETFG)	
Generator hire (Yellow Pages)		
Electrician		
Bankers	Loans	
Contractors	Pasture renewal	
Seed merchant	Buy seed & insecticide	
Fertiliser company	Buy fertiliser	
Consultant	Advice	
Vet		
Council	Rates relief, pumps	
IRD	Tax deferral	0800 377 774
Work and Income	Staff wages	

Resources available

- **Farming out of a flood page, www.dairynz.co.nz/flood**
 - Managing stressed animals in a disaster situation
 - Pasture renovation after flooding
 - Wet weather management
 - Decision tree for flooded land



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