Checklist - For Livestock and Forage Producers

Preparing for Drought

Planning ahead is crucial for livestock and forage producers to sustain their operations, provide peace of mind and minimize losses in the event of a drought. Use this checklist to identify the practices in place and those you may want to consider implementing.

FORAGE MANAGEMENT

- ☐ Analyze hay quality and record forage inventory.
- ☐ Regularly monitor stands throughout the growing season.
- ☐ Ensure pasture growth curve meets needs to minimize impact of adverse seasons.
- ☐ Store surplus forage supplies ensuring sufficient storage space and storage conditions to preserve quality.
- ☐ Implement methods to reduce feed waste.
- ☐ Optimize forage growth, including use of drought tolerant species, rotational grazing and other grazing management practices.

LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT

- ☐ Vaccinate and deworm livestock to prevent disease.
- ☐ Maintain inventory records.
- ☐ Perform regular livestock body condition assessments and adjust feed accordingly.
- ☐ Add fencing and feeding systems to support emergency situations.
- ☐ Identify options to relocate herd to where feed is available.

WATER MANAGEMENT

- ☐ Analyze water quality and ensure sufficient storage capacity.
- ☐ Implement water conservation techniques including waste management.
- ☐ Identify alternative water sources.

PERSONAL WELL-BEING

- ☐ Conduct regular team meetings and practice good communication.
- ☐ Stay connected and network with other producers and other industry professionals.

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

- ☐ Build a financial reserve for emergencies ensuring access to cash when needed.
- ☐ Identify and enroll in insurance, risk management and disaster assistance programs.
- ☐ Create, review and adjust budgets and cash flows for potential drought impacts.
- ☐ Calculate and implement cost of production analysis for decision-making.
- ☐ Generate a Farm Map and annually record throughout the seasons:
  - ☐ a) grazing dates
  - ☐ b) number of stock grazed
  - ☐ c) forage ground cover
  - ☐ d) forage harvest dates and yields
  - ☐ e) water access locations
- ☐ Review options for selling and culling stock and create contingency plans.
- ☐ Review areas for improvement after each drought and finetune for future events.

For more information, refer to the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Food Drought in Agriculture Website and Livestock Drought Management Guidebook:
https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/agricultural-land-and-environment/water/drought-in-agriculture

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