Checklist - For Livestock and Forage Producers

Managing Through a Drought

When experiencing a drought, it is important to implement key management practices to minimize losses.
Use this checklist to identify the practices in place and implement additional practices to help manage through drought.

FORAGE AND FEED MANAGEMENT

- ☐ Undertake an audit of feed reserves (including pasture) and if necessary, identify options including purchasing feed and relocating livestock to other feed sources.

LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT

- ☐ Undertake an audit – number, production stage and current value of livestock.
- ☐ Assess health and welfare, body condition score, pregnancy status of livestock.
- ☐ Ensure vaccinations and deworming are up to date, treat/sort all other health issues.

WATER MANAGEMENT

- ☐ Assess water quality and supply options and if necessary, purchase water or relocate livestock to other water sources. .

PERSONAL WELL-BEING

- ☐ Communicate with labour team and develop a work plan.
- ☐ Assess labour and well-being needs and use resources available.
- ☐ Monitor mental health of family and labour, providing support and “downtime”.

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

- ☐ Determine likely duration of drought/worst-case scenario (based on historical data).
- ☐ Calculate cost/benefit of options for each livestock class:
  - ☐ a) cost of feeding (or agistment) ☐ b) selling ☐ c) capital cost of replacing stock
- ☐ Implement culling, feed acquisition, water supply, transport strategy based on above.
- ☐ Review financial options (consider cash flow implications of feeding, including peak debt, ability to purchase feed and water impact on profit).
  - ☐ a) financial reserves. ☐ b) funding sources (loans, drought programs).
  - ☐ c) financial instruments to manage price risks (forward contracts, price insurance).

REVIEW AND ADJUST

- ☐ Monitor feed and water reserves and livestock conditions regularly, repeat steps and adjust plans as needed (daily, bi-weekly).
- ☐ Monitor financial reserves, markets and funding sources/programs and adjust plans/decisions as needed.

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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