Checklist - For Livestock and Forage Producers

Recovering from Drought

Following a drought, it is important to reflect on lessons learned and implement management practices to minimize risk when faced with future drought situations. Use this checklist to identify the practices in place and additional practices to help prepare for and manage through drought.

FORAGE AND PASTURE MANAGEMENT

- ☐ Assess forage and pasture stand recovery.
- ☐ Reseed/Rejuvenate forage and pasture stands using more drought tolerant species.
- ☐ Ensure pasture growth curve meets needs to minimize impact of adverse seasons.
- ☐ Implement rotational grazing, establishing a grazing plan to improve resilience
- ☐ Implement methods to reduce feed waste.

LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT

- ☐ Gradually reintroduce livestock to pastures.
- ☐ Monitor livestock conditions as they recover from stress.
- ☐ Plan for herd rebuilding if selling or culling occurred.

WATER MANAGEMENT

- ☐ Assess water quality and availability.
- ☐ Match livestock numbers to capacity or source additional water supply and storage infrastructure.

PERSONAL WELL-BEING

- ☐ Assess mental health of family and labour, providing support and “downtime”.
- ☐ Conduct regular team meetings and hold planning sessions to build team morale.

ANALYZE AND ADAPT

- ☐ Assess what worked and what did not during the drought.
- ☐ Adjust future management plans based on experiences.
- ☐ Consider alternative enterprise options based on finance and risk/recovery options.

INVEST

- ☐ Review/apply for available funding sources/loans/programs that offer recovery support.
- ☐ Note gaps in infrastructure needs and address (i.e. fencing, fenced containment/feedlot areas, water, transport, hay and/or feed storage).
- ☐ Explore new technologies or practices that enhance drought resilience (i.e. fencing, grazing plans, irrigation systems, water systems, soil moisture monitoring, improved forage species, budgeting, financial record keeping or cost of production calculator, cash flow analysis, labour management systems/schedules).

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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