

Drought relief assistance scheme (DRAS)

Transport of water freight subsidy

The Drought relief assistance scheme (DRAS) is offered by the Queensland Government and administered by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF). The purpose of the scheme is to assist primary producers whose properties are drought declared to manage the welfare of their livestock during drought, and to restore their herds after drought. The transport of water subsidy helps with the cost of transporting water to drought affected livestock and applies to the loaded portion of the journey only.

DRAS will be phased out as local government areas come out of drought. New assistance measures are available through the Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority (QRIDA). Primary Producers who are currently drought-declared can still access DRAS. Once revoked from drought, DRAS freight subsidies for stock returning from agistment and livestock purchase for restocking will remain available for up to two years after the drought declaration is revoked. Primary Producers can access the new drought assistance measures available through QRIDA but will lose access to DRAS. Producers can not access the new drought measures through QRIDA if they have received a DRAS payment in the same financial year. DRAS will not be available in future droughts.

Eligibility

To apply for this subsidy, you **must** meet the following conditions:

- You are a primary producer. For the purposes of this scheme a primary producer is a person or a partner in a partnership, company or trust who spends more than 50 per cent of their labour on, and derives more than 50 per cent of their gross income from, a primary production enterprise.
- You are a property owner, share-farmer or lessee in the grazing industry (beef cattle, sheep, dairy cattle, goats, deer or horses that are not normally hand-fed).
- Your property was within a State drought-declared area or had a current Individually droughted property (IDP) declaration on the date the transport occurred.
- You have not introduced any livestock on to the property during the current drought or in the three month period prior to the drought declaration, including any livestock taken on for agistment.¹
- The water is provided for grazing livestock permanently residing on the property only and for no other purpose.
- The water is transported from the closest source that is practically available.
- The water is transported by hired carrier or private vehicle.
- Your application is received in Brisbane within **six months** of the date the water was transported.

¹ The subsidy does not apply when livestock have been introduced or agisted on a drought-declared property except where:

- older core breeding stock have been replaced with weaners or replacement bulls; or
- a property owner introduces livestock to a drought-declared property from a property under the same ownership but with a different property identification code (PIC) as part of an overall drought-management strategy; or
- the property owner has served a relevant suspension period as per outlined in the 'Introduction of livestock – suspension of DRAS' section of this document.



Transport of water to stock on the stock route network

The Transport of Water Freight Subsidy can apply for livestock on the stock route network only if the home property of the livestock is in a drought declared area or is an individually droughted property (IDP).

This applies even if the location of the livestock on the stock route network is not in a drought declared area.

Applications for the Transport of water freight subsidy to livestock on the stock route network are to be completed on the same form as is used for the Transport of water freight subsidy to stock on the producer's property.

The property identification code (PIC) to be used on the application is the PIC for the property where the livestock originated. Where water is being carted to livestock on the stock route network that come from multiple properties with different PICs, the producer is to apply for the subsidy using the PIC for the property where the majority of the stock originated.

Ineligibility

The subsidy does not apply:

- to transport of water used for purposes other than to supply water for livestock, for example, to provide water for non-grazing livestock, irrigation, intensive livestock, human consumption, or household use
- to transport of water that is excessive or not necessary to meet an animal welfare need.
- when you have received a Drought Preparedness Grant, a Drought Ready and Recovery Loan, an Emergency Drought Assistance Loan and/or a Drought Carry-On Finance Loan through QRIDA.

Introduction of livestock — suspension from DRAS

This subsidy does not generally apply when livestock have been returned, introduced or agisted on a drought-declared property. When this occurs, access to all DRAS assistance measures will be suspended from the date the animals are introduced to the property and for an additional 16 weeks after the livestock, or an equivalent number, have left the property.

Non-breeders that are returned because they have been genuinely forced off agistment may remain on your drought-declared property for up to one month while further agistment is sought, before the suspension period begins.

Breeders genuinely forced off agistment and returned do not incur the 16-week suspension, provided a statutory declaration is presented with the application that indicates why the animals were forced off agistment. This is approved by DAF on a case-by-case basis.

Breeders not forced off agistment that are returned to your drought-declared property can remain on your property for a maximum of four weeks while further agistment is found, without incurring a 16-week suspension.

Weaners up to six months old can be returned to your property while it is still drought declared if weaning facilities are not available on the agistment property. A statutory declaration from the agisting property owner is required to support this.

All suspensions are lifted from the property when the drought declaration is revoked.

Subsidy rates

Subsidy rates are provided for information purposes only; you do not have to make your own calculations. Subsidies will be calculated by DAF and paid out at the following rates:

<i>Hired carrier</i>	<i>Either 50% of the loaded portion of the transport cost, or 20 cents / tonne / kilometre (whichever is the lower amount)²</i>
<i>Private vehicle</i>	<i>11 cents / tonne / kilometre</i>

Companies who own the property and use vehicles from a subsidiary company will be paid at the private carrier rate, not the hired carrier rate.

How to apply

Application forms are available online at daf.qld.gov.au or can be posted or emailed to you by contacting the Customer Service Centre on 13 25 23. Keep a copy of your tax invoices for your records and submit completed application forms and tax invoices to the DAF Brisbane office at the below address. Please post or email applications to:

*Drought Relief Assistance Scheme
Department of Agriculture and Fisheries
Level 6
GPO Box 46
Brisbane Qld 4001*

droughtdeclarations@daf.qld.gov.au

Supporting documents

DAF is unable to process water freight subsidy applications without copies of all tax invoices that relate to the purchase and transport of the water. Please include copies of all tax invoices with your application. It is useful if the invoices show the date of transport, the quantity of water transported, the distance per loaded trip and the cost of freight.

If you transport the water yourself, you must keep a logbook of all loaded trips. Water cartage logbook sheets are provided at the back of the water freight subsidy application and must be provided with your application.

For each trip, you must record the following on the water cartage logbook sheets:

- date of transport
- weight of water carted
- start and finish odometer readings
- distance per loaded trip
- number of livestock watered.

Complete the declaration at the bottom of the logbook sheet, and be sure to include details of:

- make/type of vehicle
- vehicle registration
- gross vehicle mass (GVM).

DAF may request photographic evidence of the vehicle used in private vehicle movements.

² From 1 July 2018, the subsidy rate for hired carrier increased from either 50% of the loaded portion of the transport cost, or 13 cents / tonne / kilometre (whichever is the lower amount) to 50% of the loaded portion of the transport cost, or 20 cents / tonne / kilometre (whichever is the lower amount).

Minimum and maximum payments

The minimum payment for each application is \$25. No payment will be made for any claims under this amount.

The maximum level of financial assistance available under DRAS is initially \$20,000 per property, per financial year. **For the purposes of this scheme, all properties or land parcels included under a single Property Identification Code (PIC) are considered to be one property.** This scheme does not allow the splitting of partnerships, properties or land parcels to access more than the prescribed maximum amount.

The initial \$20,000 limit may be extended to \$30,000 if a Drought Management Plan (DMP) for your property is endorsed by a DAF officer. Once a DMP is endorsed, the \$30,000 ceiling applies to the entirety of the current financial year and subsequent financial years. When a property with an endorsed DMP is in its third or subsequent year of being drought declared, the maximum allowable limit per financial year increases from \$30,000 to \$40,000. When a property with an endorsed DMP is in its sixth and subsequent year of being drought declared, the maximum allowable limit per financial year increases to \$50,000.³

Once a drought declaration is revoked, the DRAS ceiling is the level the property was on immediately prior to the revocation of the drought declaration and remains at that level for the period that the property is eligible to apply for DRAS. For example, if a property with an approved DMP was in the third year of being drought declared when the property is revoked the DRAS ceiling is \$40,000.

Properties without a DMP prior to revocation can obtain a DMP, and the DRAS ceiling limit will be \$30,000 regardless of the length of the drought declaration. For example, if a property without a DMP was in its third or subsequent year of drought prior to revocation, the producer can apply for a ceiling extension to the limit of \$30,000.

Where you have received a payment that you are not eligible to receive, DAF reserves the right to pursue reimbursement, which may include reclaiming funds from any future eligible DRAS applications that you submit.

Processing times

DAF aims to process 90 per cent of claims within 21 working days. Incomplete claims or claims that do not clearly meet the eligibility requirements may take longer. To ensure your claim is processed as quickly as possible, please make sure you have provided all of the required information and that you meet the eligibility criteria.

Payment method

DAF's preferred method of payment is direct electronic transfer into your bank account; however, you may request payment by cheque. You can indicate on your form which method you would prefer.

Assessment

DAF will consider all applications for the transport of water freight subsidy received within **six months** of the date of transport.

³ When a property with an endorsed DMP is in its sixth and subsequent year of being drought declared, the maximum allowable limit per financial year increases to \$50,000. This increase is from 1 July 2018.

Applications will be assessed against the eligibility criteria. DAF reserves the right to request further information from you, or from any business or individual you have engaged, to assist in assessing your application and to verify any information provided in your application. Failure to provide such information may result in DAF refusing your application. DAF also reserves the right to refuse an application, at its discretion, for any reason or for no reason, irrespective of whether the eligibility criteria have been met.

DAF may consult with members of your local drought committee to assist in assessing your claim. DAF may consult with QRIDA on your access to other drought assistance measures available through QRIDA.

Applications submitted may be subject to audit by DAF or its agents in order to determine compliance with scheme guidelines.

Fraudulent applications

By signing the application form, you are declaring that the information provided in the application form and supporting documentation is true and accurate. Providing inaccurate, untrue or misleading information may be a breach of criminal law for which serious penalties may apply. If any information provided in an application or supporting documentation is found to be inaccurate, untrue or misleading, legal action may be taken against you, including action to recover the subsidy.

Appeal and review process

If you are declined DRAS assistance because your claim was received by DAF outside of the eligible time limit, you can request a re-consideration by writing to the Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and outlining the reasons why your application was late. Payment of a declined claim may be approved at the Minister's discretion, if the Minister considers that there are extenuating circumstances that contributed to the late submission.

If you are declined DRAS assistance because DAF officers believe you do not meet the eligibility criteria (for example DAF officers believe you do not qualify as a 'primary producer'), you may request re-consideration by writing to the Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and outlining the reasons why you believe you are eligible and including any additional supporting evidence. Payment of a declined claim may be approved at the Minister's discretion, if the Minister considers that the evidence provided by you demonstrates that you meet the eligibility criteria.

Producer responsibilities

While a principle of this scheme is to help you to manage the welfare of your animals, it does not discharge you from your legal responsibilities under the *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001*. You should continue to manage the welfare of your animals; either by continuing to destock, by supplementary feeding or by carrying water, until such time as conditions on your property improve.

Guidelines

These guidelines are correct at the time of publishing. DAF reserves the right to amend, alter or change these guidelines at any time, and it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that they check the relevant website frequently. The guidelines that apply to your application will be the guidelines that are current at the time your application is received by DAF.

While DAF has taken all care in preparing these guidelines, DAF will not be liable in any way for any errors, omissions or variation to information in these guidelines or for not advising an applicant of any errors, omissions or variations to information in these guidelines.

DAF may cancel or suspend this scheme at any time without notice.