

# BIG HEAT READY

## – how to plan as a livestock producer

Grazing enterprises are vulnerable to the impacts of extreme heat events and failure to plan for these increasingly common situations can put your livestock and your business at risk.



In bulls, fertility may take eight weeks to recover after a heat event.

Water intake requirements of livestock increase during heat stress, ensuring access to cool, clean water is essential.

### EVEN SHORT TERM EXPOSURE TO EXTREME HEAT, CAN HAVE SIGNIFICANT LONG TERM IMPACTS ON PRODUCTIVITY

#### Livestock

- Decreased feed consumption
- Reduced fertility
- Rapid deterioration in health-compromised animals
- Organ failure and even death

#### Working animals

- Horses and dogs will continue to work undeterred so can suffer similar heat impacts to livestock
- Dung beetle populations will decline reducing valuable soil biodiversity functions

#### Pastures

- Increased evaporation causes pasture wilting and reduced growth
- Quality declines
- In severe situations, plants may die, exposing soil to erosion

#### Management Strategies

Coping with heat extremes will require a focus on grazing management and reliable access to shade and water.

In the short term, relocate animals to paddocks with reliable water and shade. Use motorbikes to muster livestock if possible or horses and dogs in the cooler times of the day. Ensure working animals have access to water to drink and keep cool.

In the mid term, graze pastures lightly to reduce dry matter to 50%. This will enhance plant survival, reduce evaporative losses and provide a buffer for soil microbes.

In the long term, revegetate shade lines or patches in grazing paddocks and establish reliable reticulated water systems.

Stay informed of weather warnings and upcoming heat events and access the local council disaster dashboard for information relevant to your area.

For further information, please email [projects@sqlandscapes.org.au](mailto:projects@sqlandscapes.org.au)

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