

WHAT DROUGHT STRATEGIES ARE AVAILABLE?

To ensure the viability of your business, animal health is maintained, and the productive resources of your farm - the soil, the capital and the livestock are managed to allow you to recover more quickly post drought.

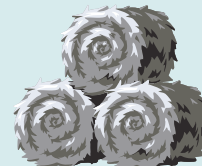
DECISION LINE

Remove all stock (sell or agist) ←








Most producers work
in this zone

→ Feed all stock



WHAT ARE THE IMPACTS OF A FEEDING STRATEGY?

-  You protect your soils and pastures.
-  High feed costs and labour needs occur in the drought year.
-  You have the stock to rebound quickly.
-  You must have adequate water to cover the feeding period.
-  Increased risk of introducing weeds, but confined to feeding areas.

Protecting your groundcover is critical during drought conditions. A feeding strategy should aim to have stock on less than 3% of the property.

Most of the farm would look like the sell or agist strategy as the stock will only be on 3% of the farm. This can be seen as containment feeding or 'sacrificial' paddocks.

WHAT ARE THE IMPACTS OF SELLING STOCK?

Your restocking strategy will determine how long it takes you to get back to your pre-drought breeding numbers.



Increased cash flow from sale of stock in the drought year.



Negative income impact 2-3 years post drought due to lack of stock or fibre to sell.



Full income will not be received until pre drought breeding numbers are achieved.

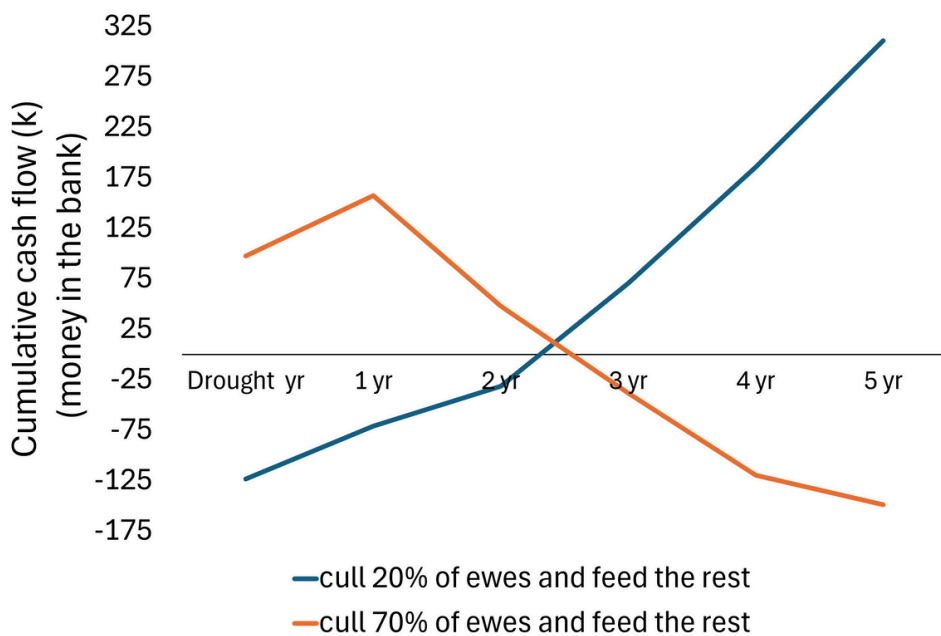


Risk of bringing in disease during restocking.



Timing of management events will likely be different to your existing program, adding extra costs.

Example of feeding strategy vs selling stock



EXAMPLE OF FEEDING STRATEGY VS SELLING STOCK

Selling stock can bring immediate benefits but can also come with longer term consequences.

Selling your ewes means you are selling your productive capacity.

WHAT ARE THE NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF AGISTMENT?



Can bring weeds to your property. Sometimes the only way to handle the weed problem is to sell or shear stock.



Stock condition will depend on the quality of the agistment (feed and management).



Successful agistment depends on regular checking of stock while they are away. A send and forget strategy often results in poor condition stock, impacting future income.

Temporarily removing stock can be a beneficial 'middle ground' strategy but can come with risks. Before dispatching your stock, it is important to understand the quality and quantity of feed available, management facilities available and the relevant pest and disease status of the agisted property.

CONSIDERATIONS



Business financial position



Your bank's attitude to your strategy



Team/family capacity to implement strategy

MORE INFORMATION

Here's the link to listen to livestock advisor, Phil Graham, for a more in-depth discussion on this topic: https://soundcloud.com/nrm_south/episode-1-intro-to-farming-forecaster

Here's a link to helpful videos explaining how to use:
StockPlan®: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-vlmWpZW2IE>
Grazfeed: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nICusYSGIzc>
Farming Forecaster: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LFE3llXxBtI>

These tools are aimed to address particular problems in drought management of livestock. For a copy of the StockPlan®, please contact NRM South.