

Introduction

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The aim of the Government's **On-farm Adverse Events Recovery Framework Review** is to promote a shared understanding of the roles and responsibilities of central government, local government and the primary production sector in preparing for, and recovering from, adverse events.

Disruptive weather is a normal part of primary production. Most of the time the risks can be managed by good planning, but in some instances severe climatic events or natural disasters mean normal strategies are not sufficient and primary producers and their communities cannot cope. This is an adverse event. The impact on primary production, such as costly damage to on-farm infrastructure, can be significant. Central government assistance may be required to ensure a speedy recovery process.

This review is an opportunity for discussion on the role of the Government and the primary sector in recovery following an adverse event. We seek your feedback on:

- how the current on-farm recovery assistance measures following medium-scale adverse events are working;
- what type of on-farm recovery assistance the Government should provide after a large-scale adverse event; and
- when the Government should provide on-farm recovery assistance (i.e. what are the criteria for defining the scale of adverse events).

This discussion document forms a key part of the review, and we encourage you to make written submissions. Consultation meetings will also be held throughout the country in October this year.

Following this consultation, MAF will report to the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry on the outcome of the consultation process and will make recommendations on the three areas noted above.

1.1 >>> Scope of the review

This discussion document focuses on **recovery** after an adverse climatic event or natural disaster, and explores the principles behind the Government's role at the **on-farm level**.

In practice there are critical linkages between the recovery phase and the initial response phase. For example, recent adverse events have shown that the efficient restoration of infrastructure in rural communities, particularly the restoration of telecommunications, is one of the primary ways of speeding recovery.

This review of recovery policy therefore sits alongside three other projects that together look at MAF's role within the wider Civil Defence Emergency Management system, and the relationship with other government agencies, industry organisations and community groups. In brief:

- MAF is reviewing its response role and capability immediately following an adverse event, including how it meshes with the rest of the response system;
- MAF is considering the role of Rural Support Trusts in adverse events, including their role in building community resilience to future events; and
- MAF is reviewing policy for recovery after a major biosecurity incursion.

The Minister of Agriculture and Forestry will be reporting to Cabinet on the first two of these by December 2006. MAF expects to carry out some targeted consultation as part of its consideration of these issues, but there will not be a discussion document. This discussion document includes a brief commentary on Rural Support Trusts and invites your feedback.

The biosecurity recovery issues will take longer to work through. At this stage no timetable or process for consultation has been decided.

Adverse events are severe climatic events or natural disasters that are beyond the ability of the community to cope.

On-farm refers to commercial agriculture, horticulture, viticulture and forestry properties.

Recovery assistance comprises central government measures additional to any initial response and wider community recovery measures.

1.2 >>> Objectives of the review

The review aims to ensure that central government recovery assistance at the on-farm level achieves seven objectives. The objectives are to:

1. **maintain individual and local communities' primary responsibility** for recovery through risk mitigation and preparedness;
2. ensure that any central government recovery assistance is **aligned with local government, industry and community group recovery assistance measures**;
3. ensure basic **family welfare needs** are met in a timely manner through appropriate and equitable assistance measures;
4. enable **economic recovery to occur at optimal speed**;
5. ensure central government recovery assistance measures **signal the necessity for sustainable land management practices, prudent risk mitigation and optimal insurance cover** by individuals;
6. ensure any assistance is delivered **efficiently and minimises the Crown's fiscal risk**; and
7. ensure the Crown is **seen to be acting fairly and reasonably to citizens in hardship**, while recognising the role of local government and community agencies.