

## Current role of Government in on-farm recovery

# 3

Local Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) groups maintain primary responsibility for response and recovery arrangements, regardless of whether an emergency is declared. MAF's initial role following an adverse event is to monitor and assess the impact on the rural sector, provide input into the local CDEM groups and their arrangements, and make recommendations to the Minister and Government about the need for any central government rural-related response.

Depending on the scale of the event, the Government may provide recovery assistance at the on-farm level that is additional to any initial response and wider community recovery measures.

There are currently three broad categories of on-farm recovery assistance:

1. **General recovery measures** – available for significantly affected producers, even where the scale of the event is fairly small.
2. **Emergency recovery measures** – available when there is a medium to large-scale event beyond the capacity of a community to cope.
3. **Special recovery measures** – additional measures following a large-scale event.

General and emergency recovery measures are discussed in this chapter. Special recovery measures are discussed in Chapter 4. The categories are grouped in this way to help frame the discussion. In practice the boundaries between these categories are not always clear-cut, particularly as adverse events that impact on the rural sector may not necessarily be civil defence emergencies. The detail of the measures and the way they are rolled out has also varied in practice.

### 3.1 >>> General recovery measures (on-farm)

These measures are generally available for individual producers badly affected by an event, even if the scale of the event is fairly small and only a small number of producers are affected.

**Table 3.1: General recovery measures (on-farm)**

Initial clean-up		
<b>Taskforce Green</b>	Affected individuals are able to apply for the labour assistance scheme Taskforce Green for initial clean up (refer to Appendix II).	Ministry of Social Development
Business assistance		
<b>Late election of provisional tax estimates</b>	Inland Revenue accepts late estimates of provisional tax from those significantly affected by an adverse event. <i>This measure is triggered by an individual declaring a 'self-assessed' adverse event.</i>	Inland Revenue Department
<b>Adverse Events Income Equalisation Scheme</b>	Enables individuals who have money deposited in the income equalisation scheme to make an early withdrawal or deposit funds arising from forced sale of livestock. <i>This measure is triggered by an individual declaring a 'self-assessed' adverse event.</i>	Inland Revenue Department
<b>Additional flexible tax provisions</b>	Inland Revenue can also look at late payment and late filing of tax, tax outstanding and entitlement. <i>This measure is triggered by an individual declaring a 'self-assessed' adverse event.</i>	Inland Revenue Department
Welfare assistance		
<b>Emergency unemployment benefits</b>	This is available for employees for whom work (and income) is not available for a short period. Income and asset tests apply.	Ministry of Social Development
<b>Special needs grants</b>	This is usually to meet a one-off need and is discretionary, based on individual circumstances.	Ministry of Social Development
<b>Psychosocial support</b>	Psychosocial support such as counselling can be made available. Although a civil defence emergency is usually regarded as the trigger for this assistance, support may be provided if the impact of the event on affected individuals is particularly acute.	Ministry of Social Development



## QUESTIONS

1. How successful are the general recovery measures in speeding up recovery?
2. Which do you think have been the most valuable, and the least valuable?
3. How can these measures be improved to speed up recovery in future adverse events?
4. Are there any other initiatives along these lines that the Government could be involved in implementing or funding?
5. Do you have any other comments about the general recovery measures?

### 3.2 >>> Emergency recovery measures (on-farm)

A range of recovery assistance measures for medium and large-scale adverse events has been developed since 1989. These emergency recovery measures are additional to the general recovery measures listed above, and are provided when the Government considers an event is beyond the capacity of a community to cope. Most of the measures have been used a number of times. Whether a specific measure is made available depends on the unique circumstances of the event.

The focus is generally on:

- providing resources for the initial clean up;
- ensuring welfare needs are met (including animal welfare); and
- facilitating local recovery initiatives.

It is proposed that the emergency recovery measures continue to be drawn from for future medium and large-sized adverse events.

A guide for determining if an adverse event triggers the availability of these measures is discussed on pages 30-33, with new criteria proposed.

**Table 3.2 Emergency recovery measures (on-farm)**

<b>Initial clean-up</b>		
<b>Enhanced Taskforce Green</b>	This is an “enhanced” labour assistance scheme that provides assistance for clean up and repairs. The enhancements may include assistance for personal safety equipment and machinery (refer to Appendix II).	Ministry of Social Development
<b>Welfare assistance</b>		
<b>Rural Assistance Payments</b>	Payments to families when their farm/orchard business cannot meet essential living needs. These payments are set at 75% of the unemployment benefit level.	Ministry of Social Development
<b>New Start Grants</b>	A one-off grant for families to permanently leave commercial farming activities where there is no adequate financial viability.	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
<b>Local recovery assistance</b>		
<b>Grants to Rural Support Trusts</b>	These grants assist Rural Support Trusts in providing support to primary producers, including financial advice, social counselling and arranging welfare support.	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
<b>Technology Transfer Grants</b>	These grants provide assistance for education and technical advice on recovery options relating to financial and contingency planning, including animal welfare. The grants can be used for a range of activities including workshops, meetings and brochures.	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
<b>Agricultural Recovery Facilitator</b>	In some recovery or stock welfare operations, the Government may appoint an Agricultural Recovery Facilitator. The facilitator’s main role is to co-ordinate the response and recovery initiatives.	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
<b>Volunteer costs</b>	In some recovery operations, costs for volunteer travel and accommodation are met.	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
<b>Media communications</b>	Costs are met to enable dissemination of key information to the media for publication/broadcast.	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry



## QUESTIONS

6. How successful are the emergency recovery measures in speeding up recovery?
7. Which do you think have been the most valuable?
8. Which have been the least valuable?
9. Do any of the measures cause unintended difficulties?
10. How could the emergency recovery measures be improved to speed up recovery in future events?
11. Are there any other initiatives along these lines that the Government could be involved in implementing or funding?
12. Are there any local initiatives that the Government should be more involved with?
13. Do you have any other comments about the emergency recovery measures?

### 3.3 >>> Rural Support Trusts

One of the emergency recovery measures is grants to Rural Support Trusts. MAF is currently considering the role of the trusts, and whether there would be benefits to building their capability and encouraging formation of trusts where none exist.

Rural Support Trusts assist rural communities in times of adversity and vulnerability. They were first set up in 1985 in the east coast regions and stemmed from the impact of subsidy removal and deregulation of the New Zealand farming sector. The trusts have been maintained through local funds donated by farmers, businesses, churches, private trusts, local authorities and grower organisations. The Government has also provided grants to some trusts following adverse events.

The operations and focus of the Rural Support Trusts differ throughout New Zealand depending on their resources, structure and reason for establishment. The core services generally include:

- providing advice on financial planning;
- disseminating information on welfare assistance; and
- providing welfare and social support.

Rural Support Trusts can play a major role in the local response and recovery phases after an adverse event. The trusts also perform a role in building community preparedness for the future.



#### QUESTIONS

14. Do you think Rural Support Trusts could play a larger role in contributing to local recovery initiatives? Why/why not?
15. What do you think the Rural Support Trusts' key roles should be?
16. Do you have any other comments about Rural Support Trusts?