

Criteria for central government intervention in on-farm adverse events recovery

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Currently there are four criteria that must be met before the Government provides on-farm recovery assistance. These are:

- the event is rare and extreme;
- the event is economically significant at a regional and/or national level;
- the event is beyond the capacity of the community to cope; and
- government intervention is essential for recovery.

These criteria operate separately from civil defence arrangements and are not reliant on a civil defence emergency declaration. In practice, the criteria act as a guide to provide an overview of the adverse event, and have been interpreted fairly flexibly.

5.1 >>> Assessment of the current set of criteria

Initial consultation with industry groups and local government highlighted that the basic principles were sound and that the criteria needed to be simple so they could be put into practice easily. It was agreed that the set of criteria needed to provide:

- **certainty**, to ensure the consistent application of recovery assistance so producers are dealt with fairly and can more effectively plan for adverse events; and
- **flexibility**, to ensure the unique circumstances of an adverse event and its impacts can be taken into account and appropriate assistance provided accordingly.

The initial consultation also highlighted three issues:

- the risk from an adverse event is related to both the event and vulnerability, and it is ultimately individuals who can reduce their vulnerability through sensible risk management;
- the magnitude of the impact on the community is as important as the size and frequency of the event; and
- the Government should provide assistance in accordance with the scale and/or type of event (the recent cluster of adverse events has highlighted this issue).

5.2 >>> Proposed approach to criteria for government intervention

MAF is proposing a new set of criteria for government intervention. This approach addresses the issues outlined previously and reflects the objectives of this review.

The proposed approach has four components:

1. A matrix approach to provide an overall assessment of the event.

This matrix would assess the event in three areas, using five criteria. These criteria would grade the adverse event on a simple three-stage scale. This scale would provide an overall assessment of whether the event was small-scale, medium-scale or large-scale.

2. A scalable approach to enable the Government to respond in accordance with the magnitude of the event.

It is proposed that in a small-scale event, the Government would provide no additional on-farm assistance (other than general recovery measures that are currently available to individual producers).

In a medium-scale event, the Government would draw from the “emergency recovery measures” as deemed appropriate for the event (i.e. one measure or a combination of measures might be appropriate). The general recovery measures would continue to be available.

In a large-scale event, the Government would draw from both the “emergency recovery measures” and, as decided following this review, one of the “special recovery measures”. The general recovery measures would continue to be available.

3. A risk management approach to balance the role of government and the primary producer.

The criteria should reflect the importance of risk mitigation prior to an event. This is important in order to maintain the balance of responsibilities between the Government and communities. Although the criteria would be a guide for the Government in intervention, it would be equally important that they reflected the role of primary producers in managing adverse events.

4. A flexible approach for government intervention.

The criteria should continue to act as a guide in decision-making because the Government’s decision to intervene would depend on a complex range of circumstances.

Table 5.1 on the opposite page shows the proposed criteria for determining whether adverse events would be classified as small-scale, medium-scale or large-scale, and what assistance would be provided by government.



QUESTIONS

34. Do you support the proposed matrix approach to the criteria for central government involvement?
Why/why not?
35. Could a scalable approach to criteria for government involvement be considered in a different way? How?
36. Can you suggest an alternative approach to the criteria?
37. Do you have any other comments regarding the criteria for central government involvement?

Table 5.1: The proposed matrix of government response

SCALE OF ADVERSE EVENT >>>		SMALL-SCALE EVENT >>>	MEDIUM-SCALE EVENT >>>	LARGE-SCALE EVENT >>>
		The majority of the criteria sit within this column	The majority of the criteria sit within this column	The majority of the criteria sit within this column
Themes	Criteria	Assessment / classification of the event		
Risk management options	Availability of options	Readily available	Moderately available	No practical options available
Magnitude of event	Likelihood of the event	Frequent	Infrequent	Rare
	Scale of physical impact	Local level	District level/ multi-district level	Regional/ national level
Capacity of community to cope	Degree of economic impact	Local level	District level/ multi-district level	Regional/ national level
	Degree of social impact (including animal welfare concerns)	Local level	District level/ multi-district level	Regional/ national level
Proposed government assistance >>>		General recovery measures	General recovery measures + Emergency recovery measures	General recovery measures + Emergency recovery measures + A special recovery measure (as decided following this review)