

RURAL ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS

Financial assistance for farming¹ families following an adverse event or natural disaster

We all try to prepare ourselves and our families for times when something unexpected happens (for example, a flood, drought or other natural disaster). One of the best ways to prepare for this is by planning ahead.

Unfortunately, sometimes, in spite of our preparations we need some extra help.

Rural Assistance Payments are the Governments' way of providing this extra help to those farming families who need it.

WHAT ARE RURAL ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS FOR?

Rural Assistance Payments are provided to meet essential living expenses for farming families affected by an adverse event.

WHAT IS AN ADVERSE EVENT?

Adverse events are climatic events or natural disasters described as medium or large scale as defined by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry's (MAF) adverse events recovery framework.

The Government scales adverse events through an adverse events recovery framework to decide what sort of assistance will be provided.

For more information on the adverse events recovery framework, see the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry website: www.maf.govt.nz

WHAT ARE THE CONDITIONS FOR PAYMENT?

- › The applicant finds it difficult to meet essential living expenses through their farming business because of an adverse event.
- › The applicant has no other significant income.
- › Payments are cash and off-farm asset tested. Farm/orchard assets such as dairy company, meat company or fertiliser company shares are not included in the off-farm asset testing.

Note 1: The term "farming" encapsulates both pastoral and horticultural operations.

Rural Support Trusts

Rural Support Trusts provide assistance and support to the rural community in times of hardship including adverse events. You can contact your local Rural Support Trust representative for any information on the assistance and support available:

| | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| Northland | Helen Moodie | 09 435 3863 | helen.moodie@landcare.org.nz |
| Waikato/Hauraki/Coromandel | Neil Bateup | 0800 787 254 | bateupn@xtra.co.nz |
| Bay of Plenty | Derek Spratt | 07 533 3764 | spratty@netsmart.net.nz |
| Gisborne | David Scott | 06 868 4840 | treescapefarm@xtra.co.nz |
| Hawkes Bay | Hugh McPhail Mike Adye | 06 858 4361 06 835 9203 | info@hughmcphail.co.nz mike@hbrc.govt.nz |
| Manawatu/Rangitikei | Margaret Millard | 06 329 6860 | millard@manawatu.gen.nz |
| Tararua District | Chris Southgate | 06 374 9862 | cwsouthgate@xtra.co.nz |
| Taranaki | Peter Adamski | 06 751 4217 | p.k.adamski@xtra.co.nz |
| Wairarapa | Bruce Watkins | 06 378 6895 | hmebw@xtra.co.nz |
| Marlborough/Nelson/Tasman | Ian Blair | 03 578 9923 | ieblair@xtra.co.nz |
| West Coast | Dianne Milne Ross Bishop | 03 738 0038 03 768 9000 | bobmilne@xtra.co.nz rossbishop@clear.net.nz |
| North Canterbury | Dorothy Oakley | 03 318 1742 | spudfarm@clear.net.nz |
| Mid Canterbury | Allan Baird | 03 308 7594 | allan.baird@xtra.co.nz |
| South Canterbury | David Hewson | 03 612 6367 | hewson@farmside.co.nz |
| Otago | Irene Scurr Bev McCaw | 03 454 6198 03 434 0459 | scurbiko@xtra.co.nz beverleymccaw@slingshot.co.nz |
| Southland | Russell Falconer | 027 431 8173 | russell.f@sld.quik.co.nz |

WHAT ARE THE PAYMENT DETAILS?

Payments are equivalent to the current rate of unemployment benefit at the time of the event.

Payments can be made for one year or for a period as approved by the Minister for Social Development and Employment, whichever is the lesser.

Payments are approved from the Monday of the week of application.

You or your partner can earn \$80.00 per week (before tax) before your Rural Assistance Payments are affected.

Payments should generally be made in a lump sum representing a four-week period. You will need to re-apply every four weeks if you need ongoing assistance.

Note: payments may need to be made weekly if there is any off-farm income that is likely to vary. In these cases the amount of off-farm income can be phoned in each week to enable the correct rate of payment.

PAYMENT RATES

| IF YOU ARE | WEEKLY PAYMENTS (AFTER TAX) |
|---|--------------------------------|
| Single under 20 at home | \$122.77 |
| Single 20–24 years | \$153.46 |
| Single 25 years or over | \$184.17 |
| Married, civil union or defacto couple with or without children | \$153.46 (each) |
| Sole parent | \$263.78 |

Notes
You may get less if you have other non-farming income.
If you have children you may also be able to get family tax credit or extra allowances.
Tax is deducted at M rate.
Rates as at 15 September 2008.

HOW CAN I APPLY?

Complete the application form available from:

- › www.workandincome.govt.nz
- › by calling Work and Income on 0800 559 009
- › or from your local Rural Support Trust.

See the Rural Support Trusts contact details in this brochure or on the MAF website:

- › www.maf.govt.nz

Your local Rural Support Trust can also help with filling out the application form if needed.

You will need an Agriculture Recovery Facilitator to sign the declaration part of the form (this is usually your Rural Support Trust co-ordinator).

Initial applications can be made either in person at a Work and Income office or through a Work and Income Rural Case Manager. Further applications to extend the duration of payments can be posted or faxed to your local Work and Income office. Contact details for your local Work and Income office are available by calling Work and Income on 0800 559 009.

WHAT OTHER SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE?

If your income has changed because of an adverse event, you may be eligible to receive extra assistance through for example Working for Families.

To see if you are eligible for more money through Working for Families go to:

- › www.workingforfamilies.govt.nz

and check how much you could get by using the calculators.

For more information, you can also call:

- › 0800 774 004 for housing and childcare
- › 0800 227 773 for tax credits