



## Quick reference guide for bushfire affected farmers

### Immediate health assessment of affected stock

- Monitor affected mob/s daily.
- Euthanase recumbent animals and those with obvious burns/oedema of body and head/feet: take photos for insurance.
- Cull cows with badly burnt teats/udder. Heavily pregnant animals can't be sold; calve them down and assess health once they calve. They may need to be euthanased rather than sold. Be aware of any antibiotic withholding periods (e.g. dry cow treatments). Discuss antibiotic treatment and pain relief with a veterinarian.
- Bushfire-affected animals should only be transported for salvage slaughter if they meet **all** the following criteria:
  - They do not show severe respiratory distress
  - They can walk without signs of lameness
  - They do not have raw burnt skin

### Longer term herd health

- Keep affected animals close for easy observation and feed them a high protein diet with access to water.
- Salmonella, ruminal acidosis and metabolic diseases may result from diet changes (such as lack of energy or fibre, or a change in ration if milking in a different dairy).
- Consider the quality of any donated fodder, cows may refuse to eat it resulting in ruminal acidosis.
- Animals may abort in the weeks following the fire: be on the lookout and treat if needed.
- Milk quality: BMCC will be high (e.g. up 750,000) after a long term power outage. Strip herd routinely (and hygienically!) in the short term to identify and treat any clinical cases. Depending on length of power outage and stage of lactation clinical cases may not be found (i.e. high SCC is part of normal udder involution). Continue milking and the BMCC should come down. Ensure every barrel of every teat is covered with teat spray at cups off.
- Feed, water, and/or labour shortages or inadequate yard or fencing may mean animals have to go on agistment or be sold for salvage slaughter.

### Immediate farming concerns

- Discuss pasture recovery with seed and fertiliser companies/department. A good resource is available at: [https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/567157/2018-Agriculture-Victoria-Pasture-Recovery-after-Fires-Quick-Reference-Guide.pdf](https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/567157/2018-Agriculture-Victoria-Pasture-Recovery-after-Fires-Quick-Reference-Guide.pdf) [Accessed 15/10/20]
- If milking at a neighbouring property (due to dairy destruction/continuing power outages), both farms must be aware of maintaining milk quality. Milk herds separately (with plant washed in between). Discuss how to assess the possibility of *Strep ag* and *Mycoplasma* in either herd with a veterinarian.
- If unable to milk and feed calves, waste milk from other farms may risk introducing disease. Milk powder and whole vat milk are safer options. Remember a diet change will increase the risk of scours.
- If milk cannot be collected by tanker, it will need to be disposed of on farm. The following options are from Dairy Australia's Managing in Wet Conditions Fact Sheet:
  - Two days of milk can be added to a well-functioning effluent pond with minimal adverse effect.
  - Dilution 1:10 with water and spread on pasture.
  - Dig a dedicated pond or trench, provided you have suitable soil to prevent milk leaching into groundwater. Always ensure that waste milk cannot run-off to waterways.

#### QUICK CONTACTS (as of 15/10/20)

The Vet Group **1800 838 700**

Stock losses:

Agriculture Victoria **1800 226 226**

Fodder requests:

VFF **1300 882 833**

Fencing:

BlazeAid **0418 745 994**

Counselling:

Ann-Marie Byrne **0447 321 599**

Other requests for support:

WestVic Dairy **03 5557 1000**